

THE INFLUENCE OF THOMAS CARLYLE UPON RALPH WALDO EMERSON

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Edinburgh University
Edinburgh, Scotland

December, 1957
(June, 1958.)



FOR MARJORY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the following:

Professor RENWICK and Dr. A. M. Clark of the University of Edinburgh for their valuable criticism and guidance during the research and writing of my thesis.

National Library of Scotland and the University of Edinburgh Library for use of their facilities and for permission to publish Emerson manuscript material.

New College Library, Edinburgh; Honmold Library, Claremont, California; and the Princeton University Library for the use of their facilities.

Mr. W. H. Bond of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, for answering a number of questions about the Emerson manuscripts.

Professor William A. Jackson, Director of the Houghton Library, for examining Emerson's copies of Carlyle's works in that Library.

Amelia Forbes Emerson, Secretary of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association, for examining Emerson's copies of Carlyle's works in the Emerson study.

Mr. Edward W. Forbes, President of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association, for granting me permission to publish five Emerson letters.

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PREFACE

PREFACE

The creative act must ultimately be an act of freedom. It is, of course, conditioned by a thousand factors, but study of its conditions--whatever they might be--has yet to reveal the secret of how that new intuition, the truly created object, came to be. And so it is with the creative man. Explain his ancestry, his upbringing, his education, his reading, his system of thought, the time in which he lived, the whole of his heredity and environment if you will, but you have not explained him. For what made him creative--that unique unpredictable genius--stands above and somehow apart from understanding.

Shakespeare, for example, can not be understood through the conditions of and influences upon his life. Furthermore, that part of Shakespeare which can be explained by natural understandable causes, without reverting to his abstract genius, is essentially not Shakespeare at all. This does not mean that, in an absolute sense, there is no answer for Shakespeare. Finally there must be, but it lies outside the limits of certainty.

Are we, then, to leave Shakespeare as unanswerable and go on to something to which exact weights and measures can be attached? Not necessarily. For although there can be no rationally understandable answer to Shakespeare, there is an answer, and we can approach it. We can, through sound scholarship, surround the answer even though we may never capture it.

And so I approach my immediate problem warily lest I think that I have the answer because I know where it is. My aim is not to put forth

the answer to Carlyle's influence upon Emerson. That would be presumptuous. Rather my aim is to close the answer within the narrowest possible boundaries which still admit to a degree of certainty, if not certainty itself. I intend to venture at times into the enclosed area but always, it is hoped, with a realization that I am on uncertain ground.

To make complete certainty a prerequisite to my findings would allow wide and perhaps meaningless boundaries. It tells us little to say that Carlyle had an influence upon Emerson between the years 1827 and 1847. And yet to go much further, I shall have to leave the solid ground of certainty for the more dangerous ground of calculated judgment and later, possibly, of opinion. Dangerous, yes! But it is safer by far than venturing into the realm of judgment with an air of absoluteness.

PART ONE

BACKGROUND

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In tackling the problem of an influence some writers have been content to go no deeper than the superficial. They see, for example, Emerson as a detached logical mind acted upon by a number of foreign forces. They examine Emerson's reading and then his writing; compare, add extensive cross references to show parallel passages; and conjured up is a mechanically-made influence which bears little if any resemblance to the truth. In doing this massive work these writers fail to realize the full importance of the unique and peculiar mental processes of the men involved. They view the mind as a machine taking in certain materials and grinding out appropriate results; they look to the mind's food to explain--and often explain away--the mind's output. It is rather like looking to grass to understand the nature of cow's milk.

The very natures of the men concerned, then, are of first importance. And of the two I shall be studying, Emerson is the more important, for primarily he is the one in question. We know what Carlyle wrote and, to a degree, when Emerson read these various works; that is factual. What we do not know and what I hope to discover in this thesis is what happened within Emerson as the result of this reading. This, in simple terms, is my problem. And I must begin not by looking at Carlyle's writings but rather by trying to understand Emerson's manner of absorbing extrinsic thought.

In doing this I shall examine briefly two closely related fields:

Emerson's epistemology and his reading habits.

Emerson's philosophy (I use the term in a broad sense) can be understood only as a whole, and not as the sum of composite parts. To separate one idea from another, to cut Emerson's pragmatism from his transcendentalism, to view him with but one eye at a time is to do him a grave injustice, for the unity of his thought is too finely balanced to bear such handling.

I shall begin, then, not with the philosophy itself but with the foundation upon which that philosophy and its delicate balance rested; that foundation was his epistemology, his manner of knowing. How did Emerson come to his knowledge? Or better perhaps, how did knowledge come to Emerson? There is, of course, no simple answer to this. He was not a systematic thinker; he had little use for discursive reason. The patient constructing of a philosophic system out of intellectual bricks and the mortar of logic seemed to him little more than a pedestrian exercise of the understanding and hence ultimately separate from truth. The method of the Eighteenth Century with its Lockes, Humes, and Hartleys he thought an enemy, and in his reaction against it he tended toward mysticism. Whether he was a mystic or not is largely a matter of definition,¹ but that his manner of knowing was essentially mystical can hardly be denied. The gleam of insight, the intuitive revelation coming to him from within his own soul, this was the portion of truth uncovered to Emerson. Truth

1. See Quinn, P.F., "Emerson and Mysticism", American Literature, vol. 21, Number 4, (January, 1950), pp. 397-414.

was not static, and if he might see it through the very depth of his soul, he could never grasp it. To act as a sounding brass for these fleeting images of truth was his hope. Thus he sought to open himself up to his own soul that it might speak to him. In a sense his position was a return to the divine affections of Jonathan Edwards, one of his spiritual forbears.

The important concept for my study is that Emerson gained his thoughts through the cryptic channel of his own soul. He borrowed from others, he learned from them, but ultimately everything that was to influence him had to pass through his own peculiar filter. A realization of this led Stephan Whicher, in his recent study of Emerson, to write, "When all allowance is made for sources, Emerson's position remains substantially a fresh insight of his own, whose nature he worked out initially by inspection without much regard to precedent."¹ There were some sources, some powerful sources, and they must be credited. But at the same time to read too much into his sources would be to neglect the deep and fundamental importance of his manner of knowing.

Emerson's reading habits, closely related to his epistemology, are of obvious importance to my study. For I must understand how he read before I can possibly attempt to evaluate the influence upon him of what he read.

1. Whicher, Stephan E., Freedom and Fate, Philadelphia, 1953, p. 31.

His reading is best characterized by two adjectives, broad and shallow. From his earliest school days all phases of learning seemed to fascinate him. He dallied with science and philosophy and metaphysics, history and theology, and occasionally things like phrenology. But he was almost always satisfied with a superficial glance into each area. In all of his omnivorous reading seldom did he stop long enough to take a second and more thorough look into anything.

In his Memoir of Emerson, James Elliot Cabot wrote that Emerson would have been partly vexed, partly amused, to hear himself described as a profound student.¹ And yet the wide range of his reading and quotations and the unhesitating way in which he often spoke on learned subjects have given this false impression. He was not a scholar. The disinterested curiosity, the quest to understand the thoughts of others, traits so essential to a good scholar, were not in Emerson. He read Plato, for example, not that he might know Plato but that he might find ideas relevant to his own situation. In his Essays he wrote:

I am faithful again to the whole over the members in the use of books. I find the most pleasure in reading a book in a manner least flattering to the author. I read Proclus, and sometimes Plato, as I might read a dictionary, for a mechanical help to the fancy and the imagination. I read for the lustres. . . . T'is not Proclus, but a piece of nature and fate that I explore. It is a greater joy to see the author's author, than himself.²

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1. Cabot, J.E., Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson, London, 1887, I, 288.
 2. RWE: Works, III, 233. Essay "Nominalist and Realist." Throughout my thesis (unless otherwise noted) I use The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Centenary Edition, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1903, in twelve volumes. Hereafter, then, RWE: Works will refer to that edition.

Because I am concerned primarily with but two men, I shall use in the footnotes their initials. (RWE or TC) when referring to their various writings.

And he felt, too, that there must be as much creativeness in reading as in writing. "One must be an inventor to read well,"¹ he told his audience in "The American Scholar" address, and added:

Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. . . .

Man thinking must not be subdued by his instruments. Books are for a scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings. . . .

Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books.²

This is Emerson deep in his self-reliance, reading only "to start his team,"³ quotating--in a sense plagiarizing--with the attitude that "it is as much according to me as according to Plato."

But this was not Emerson's only mood. Everywhere he leaves a double image upon the mind, and if at one moment he seems lost in his mystical over-soul, the next he turns to earth and is teacher to such pragmatists as William James and John Dewey. Even in his self-reliance he pointed to his debt to the past. "I am an aggregate of infinitesimal parts," he wrote in his 1834 journal, and "every minutest streamlet that has flowed to me is represented in that man which I am."⁴ Later in his

1. RWE: Works, I, 92.

2. RWE: Works, I, 89-90, 91, 89.

3. RWE: Works, VII, 403.

4. RWE: Journals, III, 381. December 3, 1834.

RWE: Journals refers to The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson, edited by E. W. Emerson and W. E. Forbes, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1909-1914, in ten volumes.

Representative Men he added, "The greatest genius is the most indebted man. . . . A great man . . . finds himself in the river of thought and events, forced onward by the ideas and necessities of his contemporaries."¹ In 1859 he became more specific; "Our debt to tradition through reading and conversation is so massive, our protest or private addition so rare and insignificant,--and this commonly on the ground of other reading or hearing,--that, in a large sense, one would say there is no pure originality."²

This was not a change of opinion in Emerson. He held both views at the same time. To him the important thing was that both ideas contained truth; that they appeared contradictory was unimportant and extraneous. He brought these two ideas together in his "Quotation and Originality", an essay which Oliver Wendell Holmes called "the key to Emerson's workshop."³ In it he concluded:

We cannot overstate our debt to the Past, but the moment has the supreme claim. The Past is for us; but the sole terms on which it can become ours are its subordination to the Present. Only the inventor knows how to borrow, and every man is or should be an inventor. . . . This vast memory is only raw material. The divine gift is ever the instant life, which receives and uses and creates, and can well bury the old in the omnipotency with which Nature decomposes all her harvest for recomposition."⁴

Now let us see what these traits in Emerson mean to an understanding of Carlyle's influence upon him. Three ideas stand out.

First. The Carlyle that influenced Emerson was not the same

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1. RWE: Works, IV, 189-190. "Shakespeare."
 2. RWE: Works, VIII, 178. "Quotation and Originality."
 3. Holmes, O.W., Ralph Waldo Emerson, London, 1886, p. 287.
 4. RWE: Works, VIII, 204.

Carlyle that appeared in his anonymous essays and later his books. At best it was an Emersonized Carlyle, partial in that Emerson was quick to cut off from the rest and disregard what he did not like. He was capable of reading with such subjectivity that it will be impossible to see in Carlyle exactly what Emerson saw.¹ And yet Carlyle was there to read and Emerson could hardly have been always as utterly self-reliant as he was want to claim. I must beware taking too seriously what the author says about himself.

The uncertainty that arises out of Emerson's reading--on the one hand only as inspiration, on the other as basis for much of his knowledge--presents me with a formidable problem. I cannot assume any necessary connection between what Carlyle said and how it affected Emerson. That, for example, Emerson read Carlyle's review of Burns means little in itself; he might have read it only "for lustres" and found nothing. Only does it take on meaning when there are definite results in Emerson. I must then keep a constant watch on Emerson's changing thought, for he, much more

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1. Emerson was quite specific on this point. In his essay "Spiritual Laws" he wrote, "Take the book into your two hands and read your eyes out, you will never find what I find." Works, II, 149. A similar passage appears in the journals of early 1832. Journals, II, 465. Again in the essay "The Over-Soul" he wrote, "In the book I read, the good thought returns to me, as every truth will, the image of the whole soul. To the bad thought which I find in it, the same soul becomes a discerning, separating sword, and lops it away." Works, II, 280. In a letter to Henry Ware Jr. he said, "I shall read what you and other good men write as I have always done, glad when you speak my thoughts and skipping the page that has nothing for me." Letters, II, 167. (October 8, 1838). RWE: Letters means The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, edited by Ralph L. Rusk, New York, 1939, in six volumes.

than Carlyle, is the measure of the influence.

Second. Arising out of the first is this observation. To argue an influence from similarity in thought--even though Carlyle's might have preceded Emerson's--would be meaningless. Basically it was this similarity that drew Emerson to Carlyle but that does not necessarily involve any cause-effect relationship. Both had a similar background, read similar books. In other words both were acted upon by a third force, and much of the similarity in their thinking can be traced to this third power. How am I going to separate the actual influence of Carlyle from the natural similarity between the two minds? Ultimately, perhaps, there can be no separation; one dissolves into the other. But again the truth is there and can be approached if not pinned down exactly. And I can do this best, it seems, by going into the influence with the alternative possibilities always in mind, realizing also that they will complement as well as exclude each other.

Third, and most important. Thus far I have been considering Emerson through his mature writings. What of his earlier years before his thought crystallized, before he became the symbol of self-reliance? The years between his graduation from Harvard in 1821 and the return from his first trip to Europe in 1833 were the formative years. These were the years of growth, of despair, of sickness, of doubt about the world and about himself. The seeds of the mature Emerson were there, hidden and unknown. His reading was, as later, wide and shallow, but he read to learn and at times he was "warped" out of his own small orbit by what he read. Plato, Dugald Stewart, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Sampson Reed,

Swedenborg, and Carlyle combined to lead him toward his own mature philosophy. These years were the years when Emerson was most open to outside forces, for he was searching, doubting, becoming Emerson. He had not yet turned inward toward his soul for knowledge. I shall expect, therefore, to see the influences of these years, although not necessarily in themselves strong, finding fertile soil in Emerson.

Professor Rusk's warning that

It would be easy to overestimate the extent of the reading Emerson did in the books of which he wrote and equally easy to exaggerate the influence of what he actually read. The oracle he praised today he might doubt or discard tomorrow. He had strong defenses against encroachments upon his ideas and clung to the belief that one's private revelation of truth must be respected first."¹

must be heeded, and yet he is here speaking of the mature man. The warning is less relevant to the Emerson of the twenties, who had not yet come to his "private revelation of truth."

With all of what has been said in the Preface and Introduction in mind, I proceed to young Emerson that I might find out Carlyle's place in his growing ideas.

1. Rusk, Ralph L., The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, New York, 1939, I, IXIV.

CHAPTER II
EMERSON THROUGH 1831

In 1823 twenty year old Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his journal of the problem that was to plague him for another decade.

We put up with Time and Chance because it costs too great an effort to subdue them to our wills, and minds that feel an embryo greatness stirring within them let it die for want of nourishment. Plans that only want maturity, ideas that only need explanation to lead the thinker on to a far nobler being than now he dreams of, good resolutions whose dawning was like the birth of Gods in their benevolent promise, sudden throbs of charity and impulse to goodness that spake most auspicious omens, are suffered to languish and blight in hopeless barrenness.¹

Sensing the promise of greatness within him, he yet felt impotent to do anything about it. Environment--Time and Chance--had imposed upon him an outer shell incompatible with his inner nature and which threatened to render his "embryo greatness" powerless. Within him the forces of environment and heredity seemed to cancel each other leaving nothing. For though by heredity a Puritan and spiritually akin to Jonathan Edwards, he was born into a Boston enthusiastic with her first taste of Enlightenment. And therein, essentially, the conflict lay. Not much was to be expected in New England's Age of Reason of a boy who confided to his brother, "Mathematics I hate."² With both philosophy and religion derived from Locke this outburst was tantamount to heresy.

And yet up to the time of his approbation to preach in 1826

1. RWE: Journals, I, 292-3. October, 1823.

2. RWE: Letters, I, 80. To William Emerson, April 1, 1819.

Emerson had followed closely the dictates of his environment; his Puritan heritage, which has been rightly taken as the most important single fact about him, lay in eclipse. He had attended the local Latin School and later Harvard College, at that time the intellectual fountain of Lockean thought. There he was exposed to, among other things, a narrow and superficial study of Locke, Hume, and Dugald Stewart. But he was not a good student; he preferred to spend his time in omnivorous reading rather than in the pedestrian exercises of his college work. Academically he ranked thirtieth in a class of fifty-nine, and neither his teachers nor his classmates recognized any portent of the mature Emerson. Like so many of his contemporaries he was, to a substantial degree, the product of the situation in which he had been raised and educated--Bostonian Unitarianism.

Essentially this Unitarianism was the offspring of the marriage of New-England Puritanism and the Enlightenment. In the eighteenth century the established order in New England had been Puritan Calvinism with its doctrines of total depravity and predestination under a wrathful God. The affections, emotional and unreasoned, ruled, and men in their quest for God reeled and staggered.¹ By the end of the century, however, the ideas of the Enlightenment began seeping into New England from Europe. The intellectual class in New England had always been the clergy, and ironically these new ideas which in Europe had led to a general rejection of all things religious found fertile ground among them. In increasing

1. This emphasis upon the emotional affections, though not a part of what is normally considered Calvinism, was latent within it. In the first half of the eighteenth century Jonathan Edwards brought out and emphasized this dormant emotionalism, and Calvinism in New England became an emotional religion.

quantity the heretical concept of man's innate perfectability was heard from the congregational pulpits.¹ A bloodless revolution was underway; the New England of Jonathan Edwards was becoming the New England of William Ellery Channing, and a rationalism was displacing the feelings.

The men in New England who fostered these ideas were and remained clergymen. Understandably, then, they did not carry rationalism to the point of scepticism but rather tried to keep it within the widening bounds of religion. Armed with the sharp sword of reason, they tried to sever the dogma from religion without at the same time taking its heart, a delicate if not impossible operation. Looking back through 150 years, we see that they failed; their prized reason had virtually taken the life out of their religion and left them with doctrines, different but still dogmatic. But viewed from Boston in the 1810's this new movement seemed a success. It was showing its strength and not its weakness.

Fundamentally Bostonian Unitarianism² had a threefold base-- revelation, reason, and the moral sense. Revelation it had carried over from its Puritan ancestry, reason from the Enlightenment, and from British philosophy the moral sense as the arbiter between the other two.

Here young Emerson ran into trouble. He had been endowed, he felt, with a strong imagination but with a proportionately weak reasoning faculty.³

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1. In the early nineteenth century Congregationalism in New England tended toward Unitarianism.
 2. Unitarianism was the name given this new movement by its opponents. The term is not particularly appropriate. The New England Unitarians neither denied the divinity of Christ nor cast aside the sacraments. Nevertheless the name became attached to the movement.
 3. See RWE: Journals, I, 360-1. April 18, 1824.

Yet at Harvard, in his home, and from the intellectual atmosphere of Boston, he had learned that reason was the way to truth and that he must distrust the imagination and the feelings. Out of step with his environment he wrote in his journal, "I have often found cause to complain that my thoughts have an ebb and flow. Whether any laws fix them, and what the laws are, I cannot ascertain."¹ "Bare reason, cold as cucumber"² had only intensified his self-distrust.

Revelation, the second foundation stone of Unitarianism, fell under the onslaughts of Hume's arguments. Only the moral sense remained of any value to Emerson. As early as 1820 he had read in Dugald Stewart that the moral sense and love of moral excellence was a natural principle of the mind which education could not supply. Here was a kindred mind; he was not alone. Echoing Stewart, Emerson, in a philosophical essay written during his final year at Harvard, claimed that the "fundamental principles are taught by the moral sense, and no advancement of time or knowledge can improve them." A few pages later he added, "The first true advance (in philosophy) . . . must go in the schools in which Reid and Stewart have labored."³

This moral sense carried Emerson around the impeccable logic of scepticism. Pure rationalism allowed for, at most, a faint deism in religious thought; Emerson revolted against this because of his heritage. Empiricism only posed problems for him; it gave him no answers. His

1. RWE: Journals, I, 284. September, 1823.

2. RWE: Letters, I, 174. September 26, 1826.

3. RWE: Two Unpublished Essays, edited by Edward E. Hale, Boston and New York, 1896, pp. 58, 76.

grasping at the concept of the moral sense manifested his discontent.

Here was something a priori, something more than Locke's tabula rasa, an answer to the ethics of Hobbes. It is no wonder, then, that Emerson hoped for a philosophical advancement through Reid and Stewart.

But in spite of their heresy, the Scottish Common-sense philosophers were essentially in the Lockean tradition. And that being so, they gave Emerson only faint relief and hope; they pointed the direction but offered nothing solid. What Emerson needed, however, was not long in coming. In 1781 Kant had heralded a new age in thought with his Critique of Pure Reason. He attacked Empiricism, not in its outworks, but at the very foundation. The empirical method, Kant argued, was not the only, or necessarily the most important, method of knowledge. There was the way of Reason, as opposed to Understanding. Understanding belongs to the realm of empiricism. It works with demonstrable facts tied together by logic. Reason, on the other hand, belongs to the realm of intuition; it works with necessary but not empirical truths. Kant went this far. Some of his followers, however, carried the distinction further, claiming that knowledge gained through the empirical method was of a lesser value than that drawn from the intuition.

Faint strains of this new philosophy arrived in New England in the 1820's, after a natural cultural lag caused in part by the formidable Atlantic. Haphazard and unconnected at first, these strains found receptive minds among those discontented with New England's Age of Reason. Emerson for one was ready for this new idealism. His first solid contact with it came appropriately during his Harvard Commencement in 1821. There

Sampson Reed, a young Swedenborgian three years Emerson's senior, announced the coming of a new age. Feeling a growing dissatisfaction with the status quo, Reed, in his Oration on Genius, admonished the church for its legalistic formalism and pointed the way to a fresh and creative approach to nature. The first requirement, he hinted, would be a rejection of Locke. Oracular and cryptic in style, the speech excited the expectation of a new day; and although its fame was short lived, its influence upon the young men who heard it, Emerson among them, was profound. Emerson borrowed the manuscript to make his own copy which he "kept as a treasure."¹ Reed, referred to later by Emerson as "my early oracle",² remained a strong influence upon Emerson for more than a decade, but it was this first oration that had the deepest effect.

It is probable that Emerson thought of Reed's oration as an example of isolated insight, for not until 1826, or only a little earlier, did he realize that there existed any substantial contemporary philosophy opposed to the Lockean school. Late in 1826 in a letter to his Aunt Mary, Emerson first wrote of what he termed 'modern philosophy' and hinted at the direction in which it was leading him.

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1. RWE: Letters, III, 74. From the typescript Journals for 1868-1870.
 2. RWE: Journals, IV, 74. June 22, 1836. The editors of the Journals noted that this quotation refers to Mary Moody Emerson. The passage to which it is attached, however, is from Reed's Oration on Genius (Reed, Sampson, "Genius" in Aesthetic Papers, edited by Elizabeth P. Peabody, Boston, 1849, pages 59-60). This leaves little doubt that "my early oracle" was Sampson Reed.

Is it not true that modern philosophy by a stout reaction has got to be very conversant with feelings? Bare reason, cold as cucumber, was all that was tolerated in aforetime, till men grew disgusted at the skeleton and have now given him in ward into the hands of his sister, blushing shining changing sentiment. . . . Be that as it may, it is one of the feelings of modern philosophy, that it is wrong to regard ourselves so much in a historical light as we do, putting Time between God and us; and that it were fitter to account every moment of the existence of the Universe as a new Creation, and all as a revelation proceeding each moment from the Divinity to the mind of the observer.¹

The term 'modern philosophy', as Emerson used it, was vague. It meant to him those trends in contemporary thought which had developed out of Kant in opposition to the Age of Reason, idealism opposed to empiricism.² But again the superficiality of his reading must be emphasized. He sensed the vitality of this idealism, but he did not know much about it. From his wide reading he took what struck his fancy, passing over the rest without note. And so he indulged somewhat too freely in some insignificant writers while neglecting some of the more important thinkers. Much excellent work has been done in tracing these

1. RWE: Letters, I, 174. To Mary Moody Emerson. September 23, 1826.

2. In his recent study of Emerson, Stephen Whicher wrote of what Emerson called 'modern philosophy.' "Take a quantity of Kant; add unequal parts of Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Jacobi, Schleiermacher, Fichte, Schelling, Oken, and a pinch of Hegel; stir in, as Emerson did, a generous amount of Swedenborg; strain through with Mme. de Stael, Sampson, Reed, Oegger, Coleridge, Carlyle, Wordsworth, Cousin, Jouffrey, Constant; spill half and season with Plato--and you have something resembling the indescribable brew called modern philosophy whose aroma Emerson began to detect in his corner of the world in the 1820's, and for which his Puritan-Unitarian-Realist palate slowly and decisively acquired a taste."
Freedom and Fate, p. 17.

various strains in Emerson; however, I am presently concerned with the total effect of 'modern philosophy' upon his development and not as yet with the details.

The Locke and Hume embedded in him by his environment were not to be extracted easily; he had been too impressed with the certainty of some of the arguments to be willing to close his mind to them. ". . . we are not to be bound," he wrote to Aunt Mary in 1827, "by suggestions of sentiment, which our reason not only does not sanction, but also condemns. 'Twere to throw our pilot into the sea in compliment to the winds."¹ He was not yet ready for the mystical element of the new idealism. His thought, however, was constantly changing, and at that time it was moving toward a reliance upon intuitive knowledge. In May of 1828 he added to his journal:

. . . I find a kindling excitement in the thought that the feeling which prompts a child to an act of generosity is the same which guides an archangel to his awful duties; that in the humblest transaction in which we can engage we can introduce these stupendous laws which make the sovereignty of the creation, the character of God. It seems to me, in obeying them, in squaring my conduct by them, I part with the weakness of humanity. I exchange the rags of my nature for a portion of the majesty of my Maker. I am backed by the universe of beings. I lean on omnipotence."²

Until 1830 these ideas were unconnected in Emerson's mind. At that time, under the stimulus of a rereading of Coleridge,³ Emerson's thoughts

1. RWE: Journals, II, 222. November 20, 1827.

2. RWE: Journals, II, 242. May, 1828.

3. According to the Harvard College Library records Emerson withdrew Coleridge's Biographia Literaria on November 16, 1826. (K.W. Cameron, Ralph Waldo Emerson's Reading, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1941, p. 26). Possibly also Emerson read Aids to Reflection, which Sampson Reed was circulating among his friends in 1827. (K.W. Cameron, Emerson the Essayist, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1945, volume II, pp. 214-215.) There is, however, no reference by Emerson to this work until January, 1830.

began to come together, a process which continued through 1831. Out of this developing unity was born Emerson's spiritual conversion. He suspected it as early as June, 1830, when he wrote, "Conversion from a moral to a religious character is like day after twilight. The orb of the earth is lighted brighter and brighter as it turns, until at last there is a particular moment when the eye sees the sun, and so when the soul perceives God."¹ Light came for Emerson when he perceived God in the one place reason and doubt could never touch--in itself.

The "amazing revelation of my immediate relation to God"² struck Emerson sometime during the spring or summer of 1831. On May 6 he delivered a sermon entitled "God in the Soul", and then two months later in his journal he abandoned his usual prose for poetry to express a similar feeling. Under the title Γνωθὺ Σεαυτὸν --Know Thyself³--he addressed himself in soliloquy, showing his first joy at the discovery of God within.

If thou canst bear
Strong meat of simple truth,
If thou durst my words compare
With what thou thinkest in the soul's free youth,
Then take this fact upon thy soul,--
God dwells in thee

Clouded and shrouded there doth sit
The Infinite
Embosomed in a man;
And thou art stranger to thy guest,
And know'st not what thou dost invest.
The clouds that veil his life within

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1. RWE: Journals, II, 298. June 7, 1830.
 2. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, edited by A.C. McGiffert, Jr., Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1938, p. 200.
 3. Significantly Emerson borrowed this title from Coleridge. See The Friend (London, 1818), volume III, 241; and Biographia Literaria (London, 1817), volume I, 254, 280.

Are thy thick woven webbs of sin,
Which his glory struggling through
Darkens to thine evil hue.

Then bear thyself, O man!
Up to the scale and compass of the guest;
Soul of thy soul.
Be great as doth beseech
The ambassador who bears
The royal presence where he goes.

Give up to thy soul--
Let it have its way--
It is, I tell thee, God himself,
The selfsame One that rules the Whole,
Tho' he speaks thro' thee with a stifled voice,
And looks through thee, shorn of his beams.
But if thou listens to his voice,
If thou obey the royal thought,
It will grow clearer to thine ear,
More glorious to thine eye.
The clouds will burst that veil him now
And thou shalt see the Lord.

Therefore, O happy youth,
Happy if thou dost know and love this truth,
Thou art unto thyself a law,
And since the soul of things is in thee,
Thou needest nothing out of thee.
The law, the gospel, and the Providence,
Heaven, Hell, the Judgement, and the stores
Inmeasureable of Truth and Good,
All these thou must find
Within thy single mind.
Or never find.

There is nothing else but God.
Where'er I look.
All things hasten back to him
Light is but his shadow dim.¹

From this time on the first principle of his thought was the faith
in the divinity of his own soul. This became the cornerstone upon which

1. RWE: Journals, II, 395-399. July 6, 1831. The complete poem is
reprinted in Cameron's Emerson the Essayist, I, 175-179.

all of his subsequent thought was built. Epistemologically he was now a kind of mystic searching the cryptic paths of his own soul for knowledge. His mysticism, unlike that of the East, was active and purposefully vital. The mystical experience became a dynamic means rather than a passive end; its goal was insight into the conduct of life. ". . . this is my charge, plain and clear," he wrote in 1833, "to act faithfully upon my own faith; to live by it myself, and see what a hearty obedience will do."¹ His mature statement on this subject came in his essay "Self-Reliance", where he wrote, "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. . . . No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature."²

The lurking arrogance of this statement is obvious, and Emerson was well aware of it. "God forbid that I should one moment lose sight of his real eternal Being, of my own dependence, my nothingness, whilst yet I dare hail the present deity at my heart."³ Ultimately Self-reliance was God-reliance.

His resignation from the church in 1832 was little more than an external manifestation of the inward changes of the previous year. To his congregation he gave the Quaker arguments against the Lord's Supper as his reason for resigning. They could not have understood his real motive, nor did he himself. A year later, on his return from Europe, he stood again in his former pulpit and hinted at the true reason.

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1. Quoted in Woodberry, George E., Ralph Waldo Emerson, New York, 1907, p. 40. This passage is not, however, in the published Journals. I assume, then, that it comes from the manuscript journals.
 2. RWE: Works, II, 47.
 3. RWE: Journals, II, 509. August 19, 1832.

Man begins to hear a Voice . . . that fills the heavens and the earth saying, that God is within him, that there is the celestial host. I find that this amazing revelation of my immediate relation to God, is the solution to all the doubts that oppressed me, . . . within this erring passionate mortal self, sits a supreme calm immortal mind whose powers I do not know, but it is stronger than I am, it is wiser than I am, it never approved me of any wrong. . . . It is the door of my access to the Father. It seems to me the face which the Creator uncovers to his child.¹

Thus Emerson reached his intellectual majority. "There are two ways of living in the world", he copied from his brother's journal, "either to postpone your own ascetic entirely and live among people as among aliens; or, to lead a life of endless warfare by forcing your ideal in act."² Emerson chose the more militant and marked its beginning by quitting the profession which through heritage and environment had claimed him. "The government, the laws, the customs into which we are born--they are like the shell of outer skin of many animals. If it do not admit to growth the animal will cast it."³

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1. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, 200.
 2. RWE: Journals, IV, 42. May 16, 1836.
 3. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, 55. September 27, 1829.

PART TWO

CARLYLE AND EMERSON

1827 - 1833

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The reasons for Emerson's first encounter with the writings of Carlyle are simple. From his days at Harvard, Emerson had been an enthusiastic reader of the Edinburgh Review.¹ He also had an uninformed curiosity about current German thought, fostered in large part by his elder brother's reports from Göttingen.² Quite naturally, then, when Carlyle's first review of German literature appeared in the Edinburgh Review, Emerson read it. This happened in October, 1827.³ What Emerson did not know, and what at the time would have meant little to him had he known it, was that Thomas Carlyle was the anonymous writer.

Although interesting, these details are of small importance to an understanding of Emerson's attraction to Carlyle. They answer the how but not the more important why. The attraction was essentially one between like minds. A comparison of their early journals and letters shows a

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1. See RWE: Letters, I, 61. To William Emerson, May 19, 1818. "You like the Edinburgh Review; by only reading one solid dissertation there, where the finest ideas are ornamented with the utmost polish and refinement of language you feel some enthusiasm to turn your own steps into a new path of the field of belles lettres."
 2. See RWE: Letters, I, 152. William Emerson to Ralph Waldo Emerson, August 27, 1824. "Learn German as fast as you can for you must come here, even if I take to school-keeping again."
 3. See RWE: Letters, I, 218. To William Emerson, October 31, 1827. "Please look at last Edin. Rev. XCI, p. 185. It is an account of Richter's wk. exactly describes Aunt Mary's style." It is interesting, though perhaps irrelevant, that Mary Moody Emerson's style, which Emerson admired, was similar to Richter's, and that Richter's style was a model for Carlyle's style. (see Wilson, David Alec, Carlyle to "The French Revolution", London, 1924, page 111). It is conceivable that Emerson was attracted in part by Carlyle's style.

marked mental similarity. Both had emerged from a tradition of Calvinism. Both had grown up during the Age of Reason. Both sensed the sterility of linear logic. Both made their initial thrusts against discursive reason. To stress the similarity between Carlyle and Emerson, however, would be a distortion. But it was this early, perhaps superficial, similarity that brought Emerson to Carlyle. Carlyle was giving voice to ideas which Emerson was enthusiastic to hear.

The attraction cannot, of course, be passed over quite so easily. It was not immediate and spontaneous. Emerson was slow in his assimilation of foreign ideas; he had to come into contact with an idea several times before he paid much attention to it. As a corollary to this he was slow in his enthusiasm for the men behind the ideas. It was five years after his first reading of Carlyle before he made any direct reference to the author. Carlyle's anonymity goes far to explain this delay in recognition, but it does not completely explain it. Emerson's own reticence played a substantial part. He was by no means the first or indeed the most enthusiastic of the anonymous writer's followers in New England.

The ideas of Carlyle came into New England in the influx of the Romantic Revolt. By the time Carlyle's Richter appeared Emerson had been well prepared for the new voice. He had already felt the vitality of Idealism; he had read Stewart¹ and a part of Coleridge; he had gladly

1. Carlyle felt that an assiduous study of Stewart was the best preparation for studying Kant. See TC: Works, XXVI, 79 (note). TC: Works refers to The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Centenary Edition, London 1896-1899, in thirty volumes.

listened to Sampson Reed and William Ellery Channing, the nominal head of Bostonian Unitarianism who had already sensed the shortcomings of Lockean thought. More important than these, his Puritan heritage had prepared him for the revolt from the eighteenth century spirit. Only as a part of this larger movement can Carlyle's early influence in America, and more specifically upon Emerson, be understood. Not yet known by name or generally considered as a separate entity, Carlyle was but a new force added to the rising tide of Romanticism.

He was, however, somehow distinctive; he did not merely echo the ideas of the other Romantics. As his anonymous essays flowed into New England (about thirty in the six years with which I am presently concerned), discerning readers sensed the work of a single author. A contemporary of Emerson, James Freeman Clarke wrote of Carlyle, "Before we knew his name, we knew him. We could recognize an article by our new author as soon as we opened the pages of the Foreign Review, Edinburgh, or Westminster, and read a few paragraphs."¹ Clarke's use of the collective we is significant for there were many who were enthusiastic. In his first letter to Carlyle in 1834 Emerson wrote, ". . . some chance wind of Fame blew your name to me, perhaps two years ago, as the author of papers which I had already distinguished (as indeed it was very easy to do) from the mass of English periodical literature as by far the most original and profound essays of the day."² What distinguished these essays will become apparent in the

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1. Clarke, J.F., Nineteenth Century Questions, London, 1898, p. 166. Reprinted from Clarke's article "The Two Carlyles, or Carlyle Past and Present" in the Christian Examiner, September, 1864.
 2. RWE: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, (London, 1883), I, 11.

course of this part of my thesis. That they were distinguished by some readers will suffice for the present.

Before moving on to an examination of the early influence I shall glance at Carlyle during these years 1827-1833, years which marked the completion of his literary apprenticeship. By 1827 the direction in which his mind was to lead him was fairly clear. He had made his break with the past; the everlasting yea had replaced the everlasting no; and he was ready, he felt, to present his message to the world, a message essentially that of the great Romantic poets and thinkers. As he had not yet attained any literary fame, he took the only avenue open to him and submitted his work to literary periodicals. In the Edinburgh and Foreign reviews, in Fraser's Magazine, he found his first pulpit.¹

Contemporary German thought had been a considerable factor in his intellectual development. Goethe and Fichte, Novalis and Schiller had helped him in his struggle from the bondage of rationalism, and quite naturally for a time anyway his interests worked with German ideas. British thought was still entrenched in what Whitehead has called "one-eyed reason deficient in its vision of depth."² It was against this established order that Carlyle aimed his early essays.

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1. See TC: Reminiscences (edited by J.A. Froude, London, 1881), II, 23. "I was now (1827) in a sort fairly launched upon literature, and had even to sections of the public become a 'Mystic School'; not quite prematurely, being now of the age of thirty-two, and having had my bits of experience, and gotten really something which I wished much to say."
 2. Whitehead, Alfred North, Science and the Modern World (Cambridge, 1926) p. 83, Chapter IV.

What concerns us in these essays is not the subject matter but the author portraying himself. Carlyle as a critic is often the best critic of Carlyle. Like Emerson he was not a scholar; he was too much involved in his own ends to be disinterested. He used his material to serve his ideas rather than acted as a servant to his material. And so although we do not often meet the real Goethe, or Kant, or Novalis in the essays, we are always confronted with the real Carlyle.¹

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1. This poses for me a definite problem. How much of Carlyle's influence upon Emerson was ultimately German in origin and merely channeled through Carlyle and how much was really Carlyle? For example, Carlyle was instrumental in introducing Goethe to Emerson. Largely out of consideration for Carlyle's judgment Emerson read through the full fifty-five volumes of Goethe's works in the original German. (This reading was Emerson's furthest venture into any language other than English). Yet to say that Goethe's influence upon Emerson was also Carlyle's would be unjustifiable. This is an obvious example; there are many less clear but fundamentally as important. An answer to this can only be approached by keeping it in mind as I move through the details of the influence.

CHAPTER II

REASON AND UNDERSTANDING

In his Nineteenth Century Studies, Basil Willey wrote of Carlyle, "It is not easy to divide his thought into 'aspects', for to him as to Coleridge, 'the unity of all had been revealed', and one of the main sources of his influence was his power of suggesting that all topics were aspects of the one topic, and that the most important of all."¹ This is no less true of the pre-Sartor Resartus Carlyle than of the more famous author of the French Revolution and Heroes. In order to understand that unity, however, it will be necessary to study the aspects, and if in so doing we lose some of the original vitality, it will not be without some realization of this loss. I venture, then, into the parts of Carlyle's influence upon Emerson, realizing that only in the whole--and this whole is qualitatively different than the sum of the parts--can the influence be comprehended.

The distinction between Reason and Understanding, which I shall examine in this chapter, has no persistent place in Carlyle's thought, largely because of his lack of interest in epistemological problems. Nevertheless, this very distinction about which he later made jest² was vital to his early thinking, and it appears frequently in his notebooks and essays before Sartor Resartus.

For the mature Emerson this distinction was fundamental. It was

1. Willey, Basil, Nineteenth Century Studies (London, 1950), 105.

2. See TC: Works, XI, 58-9.

his answer to the linear logic of the eighteenth century. His first direct mention of the distinction came in 1834 when in a letter to his younger brother Edward he wrote:

Philosophy affirms that the outward world is only phenomenal & the whole concern of dimmers, of tailors, of gigs, of balls whereof men make such account is a quite relative and temporary one--an intricate dream--the exhalation of the present state of the soul--wherein the Understanding works incessantly as if it were but the eternal Reason, when now & then he is allowed to speak, declares it is an accident, a smoke nowise related to his permanent attributes. Now that I have used the words, let me ask you do you draw the distinction of Milton, Coleridge, & the Germans between Reason & Understanding? I think it a philosophy itself & like all truth very practical. So now lay away the letter & take up the following dissertation on Sunday. Reason is the highest faculty of the soul--what we mean often by the soul itself; it never reasons, never proves, it simply perceives; it is vision. The Understanding toils all the time, compares, contrives, adds, argues, near sighted but strong-sighted, dwelling in the present, the expedient, the customary. Beasts have some understanding but no Reason. Reason is potentially perfect in every man--Understanding in very different degrees of strength. The thoughts of youth, & 'first thoughts', are the revelations of Reason, the love of the beautiful & of Goodness as the highest beauty, the belief in the absolute & universal superiority of the Right & the True. But understanding, that wrinkled calculator, the steward of our house to whom is committed the support of our animal life, contradicts evermore these affirmations of Reason & points at Custom & Interest & persuades one man that the declarations of Reason are false & another that they are at least impracticable.¹

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1. RWE: Letters, I, 412-3. To Edward Bliss Emerson, May 31, 1834. I have added some punctuation to the quoted passage for clarity. A more complete analysis of this distinction appears in the Journals of 1833 (volume III, pp. 235 ff.), but this undated passage, it is generally agreed, has been wrongly placed in 1833 by the editors of the journals. It was probably written during 1834 or 1835. See Pochmann, Henry A., "The Emerson Canon", University of Toronto Quarterly (volume XII, no. 4, July, 1943), pp. 476-484.

The realization of this distinction did not come upon Emerson suddenly; it had been building up in his thinking under various stimuli since the middle twenties, perhaps earlier. A study of the growth of this idea within Emerson's mind affords one of the best examples of the slowness of his mind in its creative processes.

The circumstances of Emerson's first contact with the distinction between Reason and Understanding are uncertain. He might have found a hint of it in Plato's Theaetetus. Whether he did or not, his early interest and reading in Plato undoubtedly helped in preparing the way for this distinction. Again, there is a pointing toward the distinction in Locke whom Emerson read, though not attentively, in college.¹

The Scottish philosopher Dugald Stewart made use of a form of this distinction.² Emerson had read Stewart at Harvard and had temporarily become his disciple. Stewart was the first of the modern thinkers to whom Emerson attached himself, and although the close relationship was brief a substantial influence is undeniable.³

Emerson's early concern with the Moral Sense, with which Stewart was closely connected, was the forerunner of his later acceptance of the distinction between Reason and Understanding. In 1822 he wrote in his

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1. Locke distinguished "the two most different things I know in the world, a logical chicaner from a man of reason." On the Conduct of the Understanding (edited by B. Corney, London, 1859), section 3, p. 13.
 2. See especially Elements of the Philosophy in the Collected Works of Dugald Stewart (edited by William Hamilton, Edinburgh, 1854-60), volume III, pp. 10 ff.
 3. For a study of Stewart's influence upon Emerson see Davis, Merrell R., "Emerson's 'Reason' and the Scottish Philosophers", in The New England England Quarterly, volume 17, no. 2, June, 1944, pages 209-228.

journal:

This Sentiment which we bear within us, is so subtle and unearthly in its nature, so entirely distinct from all sense and matter, and hence so difficult to be examined, and withal so decisive and invariable in its dictates--that it clearly partakes of another world than this, and looks forward to it in the end. . . .

This sentiment differs from the affections of the heart and from the faculties of the mind. The affections are indiscriminating and capricious. The Moral Sense is not. The powers of the intellect are sometimes wakeful and sometimes dull, alive with interest to one subject and dead to the charm of another. There are no ebbs and flows, no change, no contradiction in this.¹

Clearly Emerson was open to the distinction.

On November 16, 1826 Emerson withdrew Coleridge's Biographia Literaria from the Harvard College Library,² but whether he read it and if so how much is a matter of conjecture. Chapter ten of that work discusses the distinction, and it is probable that Emerson noticed the book, if not in 1826, sometime before 1830.³

The distinction next appeared to Emerson in the Edinburgh Review of October, 1827. A review in it of "The State of German Literature" by an anonymous contributor (who was, in fact, Thomas Carlyle) was specific in its mention of the distinction.

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1. RWE: Journals, I, 187-8. November 16, 1822.
 2. Cameron, K.W., Ralph Waldo Emerson's Reading, 46. Records from the MS charge lists.
 3. See Journals, II, 280, where Biographia Literaria is included in Emerson's book list for 1828 and 1829. This list, however, was compiled by the editors of the journals and hence is subject to error. (For an example of such an error see page 79.)

There is a possibility that Emerson saw Coleridge's Aids to Reflection early in 1827. At that time Sampson Reed was passing around among his friends his copy of the work, and perhaps--although there is no other evidence--Emerson was one of them. See above page 17.

The Germans take up the matter differently, and would assail Hume, not in his outworks, but in the centre of his citadel. They deny his first principle, that Sense is the only inlet of Knowledge, that Experience is the primary ground of Belief. Their Primitive Truth, however, they seek, not historically and by experiment, in the universal persuasions of men, but by intuition, in the deepest and purest nature of Man.

We state what to ourselves has long appeared the grand characteristic of Kant's Philosophy, where we mention his distinction, seldom perhaps expressed so broadly, but uniformly implied, between Understanding and Reason (Verstand and Vernunft). To most of our readers this may seem a distinction without a difference: nevertheless, to the Kantists it is by no means such. They believe that both Understanding and Reason are . . . modes of operation by which the mind discovers Truth: but they think that their manner of proceeding is essentially different; that their provinces are separate and distinguishable, nay, that it is of the last importance to separate and distinguish them. Reason, the Kantists say, is of a higher nature than Understanding; it works by more subtle methods, on higher objects, and requires a far finer culture for its development, indeed in many men it is never developed at all: but its results are no less certain, nay, rather they are much more so; for Reason discerns Truth itself, the absolutely and primitively True; while Understanding discerns only relations, and cannot decide without if. The proper province of Understanding is all, strictly speaking, real practical and material knowledge, Mathematics, Physics, Political Economy, the adaptation of means to ends in the whole business of life.¹

That Emerson read this review is certain. When he read it can be questioned. His habit of reading the Edinburgh Review was already well established, and the Title, to be sure, would be attractive to him. Added to these, his mention of the essay in 1833 as "say 5 years ago"² makes it safe to assume that he read it soon after its arrival in New England, probably early in

1. TC: Works, XXVI, 81-2.

2. RWE: Letters, I, 394. To Alexander Ireland, August 30, 1833.

1828.¹ In any case he made no immediate reference to the essay nor did it seem to have any immediate effect upon his thinking.

In May of 1828 Emerson wrote in general terms of what both Carlyle and Coleridge had termed Reason.

I find a kindling excitement in the thought that the feeling which prompts a child to an act of generosity is the same which guides an archangel to his awful duties; that in the humblest transaction in which we can engage we can introduce these stupendous laws which make the sovereignty of the creation, the character of God. It seems to me, in obeying them, in squaring my conduct by them, I part with the weakness of humanity. I exchange the rags of my nature for a portion of the majesty of my Maker. I am backed by the universe of beings. I lean on omnipotence.²

It is significant that he could write of the idea without using the terminology of either Coleridge or Carlyle. He was, it seems, working out his thoughts on his own with only a vague, indirect guidance from his reading.

In the April, 1829 issue of the Foreign Review appeared, without the author's name, Carlyle's article on Voltaire. In it Carlyle used the distinction between Reason and Understanding, although seldom mentioned as such, as a standard of criticism. Voltaire was a man of Understanding but not of Reason, a man whose "deductions are uniformly of a forensic, argumentative, immediately practical nature; often true, we will admit, so far as they go; but not the whole truth; and false, when taken for the

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1. Although the Edinburgh Review which contained this review was dated October, 1827, it was not available to British readers until soon after November 19, 1827. On November 19, Carlyle wrote to a friend, "There is a paper of mine in the next Edinburgh Review, which is all printed and will be out in a day or two." (Letters of Thomas Carlyle, edited by C.E. Norton, London, 1888, volume II, 104). This delay in publication was not, however, customary with the Edinburgh Review.
 2. RWE: Journals, II, 242. Quoted above on page 17.

whole."¹ When Emerson read this essay is uncertain; in 1837 he included it in a list of Carlyle's writings,² but there is no clear evidence that he read it before that time.³

The distinction between Reason and Understanding came to Emerson next in Carlyle's (again anonymous) "Signs of the Times", which appeared in the Edinburgh Review of June, 1829. Again Emerson made no immediate reference to it. The essay, however, did cause some stir in New England,⁴ and this along with his enthusiasm for the Edinburgh Review may be taken as circumstantial evidence that he read the article soon after it was published. In "Signs of the Times" Carlyle described the period as the Mechanical Age, of the mind as well as of the body. Even metaphysics was, according to the essay, material with its Smith, Bentham, and Mill, who "stand among us not to do, nor to create anything, but as a sort of Logic-mills, to grind out the true causes and effects of all that is done and created."⁵ The individual being is lost in the vast machinery of the times and must himself become a mechanical cog to accomplish even the poorest enterprise. There is, however, Carlyle went on, "a science of Dynamics in man's fortune and nature, as well as of Mechanics. There is a science which treats of, and practically addresses, the primary,

1. TC: Works, XXVI, 445-6.

2. From typescript journals not in print. For complete journal entry see Appendix B.

3. Possibly Emerson read "Voltaire" in 1832 when he first learned of Carlyle. See page 74.

4. In the North American Review (XXXIII, July, 1831, pp. 122-126), Timothy Walker condemned the article as a "wild bugle-call," and defended the mechanism of the age for the comfort and prosperity it had brought.

5. TC: Works, XXVII, 74.

unmodified forces and energies of man, the mysterious springs of Love, and Fear, and Wonder, of Enthusiasm, Poetry, Religion, all which have a truly vital and infinite character."¹ No high attainment was ever accomplished otherwise than dynamically. In saying this Carlyle was not a Primitivist; he did not advocate a return to the close-to-nature pre-mechanical era. Science and Technology he found as intolerable masters, but he did not want to get rid of them. Ruled instead of ruling, they might be useful servants.

What is this, ultimately, but the distinction between Reason and Understanding in practical form? An action motivated by Reason is dynamic; one by the Understanding is mechanical. It was this using of the distinction rather than the mere pointing to it that made Carlyle's words meaningful. His was the method of the preacher, bringing the abstract into a practical situation, using example after example to drive home ideas that might otherwise have been, and often were, condemned as useless.

Carlyle's making pragmatic use of ideas rather than merely discussing them is of vital importance to the influence, for what stimulated Emerson was the biographical use of ideas, ideas vindicated in life and personified in acts. Hence, later, he admired Alcott and Thoreau but hesitated in his respect for Goethe. Hence, he said in "The American Scholar", "A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think. Does he lack organ of medium to impart his truths? He can still fall back on this elemental force of living them. This is the total act. Thinking is a

1. TC: Works, XXVII, 68.

partial act."¹

In his anonymous essay "Novalis" in the Foreign Review of July, 1829, Carlyle put forth his most complete exposition of German transcendentalism, to which, as he pointed out, the distinction between Reason and Understanding was essential. Emerson read "Novalis"² but again it is uncertain when. He had as yet made no reference to the Foreign Review, nor is there any proof that he had been reading it at this time. It is possible that in 1832 when he had learned that Carlyle was the author of "Corn Law Rhymes" and certain other pieces he went back through various periodicals to seek out anonymous essays by Carlyle which he had missed. In any case he had seen the article by the middle of 1834.

During the winter of 1829-1830, Emerson, with an enthusiasm unusual for him,⁴ read Coleridge's The Friend and Aids to Reflection. To

1. RWE: Works, I, 99.

2. In 1834 Emerson quoted from "Novalis", "It is the instinct of the understanding to contradict the reason." Journals, III, 340. September 15, 1834. From TC: Works, XXVII, 27. Carlyle accredited the statement to Jacobi; Emerson said that it was from Novalis--an understandable error since Emerson had noticed it in the essay, "Novalis." Emerson used the idea several times. See Journals, III 237, 340, 377, 467, and Letters, I, 413.

3. See previous note.

4. For example, on December 10, 1829, soon after his first encounter with The Friend, Emerson wrote to his Aunt Mary of Coleridge, "He has a tone a little lower than greatness--but what a living soul, what a universal knowledge! I like to encounter these citizens of the universe, that believe the mind was made to be spectator of all, inquisitor of all, and whose philosophy compares with others much as astronomy with the other sciences, taking post as the centre and, as from a specular mount, sending sovereign glances to the circumference of things. . . . There are few or no books of pure literature so self-imprinting, that is so often remembered as Coleridge's." Journals, II, 277.

these works the distinction between Reason and Understanding was integral; it was the center of Coleridge's philosophical and religious thought. He defined the terms ("They differ in kind."¹) and discussed them in detail.² "Reason is the Power of universal and necessary Convictions," "an intuition and immediate Beholding," which "in all its decisions appeals to itself, as the ground and substance of their truth." "Reason and Religion differ only as a two-fold application of the same power." "Understanding in the highest form of Experience remains commensurate with the experimental notices of the senses, from which it is generalized. Reason, on the other hand, either predetermines Experience, or avails itself of a past Experience, to supersede its necessity in all future times; and affirms truths which no Sense could perceive, nor Experiment verify, nor Experience confirm."³ Emerson could not have but noticed this distinction.

Speaking in general terms, one might say that Coleridge remained in the world of ideas, working and thinking in abstractions, seldom becoming a part of the world of men and things.⁴ Thus he opened himself to

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1. Coleridge, S.T., Aids to Reflection (edited by James Marsh, Burlington, Vermont, 1829) page 142.
 2. "To establish this distinction [between Reason and Understanding] was one main object of The Friend." Coleridge, S.T., Biographia Literaria (Oxford, 1907), I, 110. For Coleridge's discussion of the distinction, see especially The Friend (London, 1818), I, 263-277; Aids to Reflection (Liverpool, 1878), 189-206; Biographia Literaria, I, 107-151.
 3. Coleridge, S.T., Aid to Reflection (edited by James Marsh, Burlington, Vermont, 1829), 137, 305 (notes), 142, 371 (notes), 304 (notes). This first American edition of Coleridge's work was the one Emerson read. Those quotations taken from the notes are of James Marsh, the editor, but they express the Coleridge idea.
 4. I realize, of course, that this is arguable. His ridicule of Wordsworth in Biographia Literaria concerning "rustic life close to nature" is a point on the other side. My statement is a generality and should be taken as such.

the charge that some of his ideas were "celebrated but useless."¹ His philosophical works were often dry and academic, lacking the vitality that a few meaningful examples would have added. His meaning was often obscure ("People wag their heads and say, I can't understand Coleridge."²), especially to a people trained in the shadow of the eighteenth century. And his influence, great as it was, was confined largely to minds which already leaned in the direction in which he was to lead them. And even then only seldom was he a direct influence. His mind, his conversation, attracted a number of remarkable young men to his side (among whom were John Sterling and for a time Carlyle), and essentially through these men his ideas were filtered and presented to the world. That this was so does not detract from John Stuart Mill's assertion that Coleridge was one of "the two great seminal minds of England"³ in the early nineteenth century; it only qualifies that assertion.

Late in 1830, perhaps early in 1831 (the exact date is uncertain), Emerson copied in his journal an extract from the Mahabharate, one of the sacred books of India: "The senses are nothing but the soul's instrument of action; no knowledge can come to the soul by their channel."⁴ Then on March 6, 1831 he made his first extant mention of Reason in its German-Coleridge-Carlyle meaning. "This pure and holy inmate of every human

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1. Willey, Basil, Nineteenth Century Studies (London, 1950), 11. Willey quoted from another source.
 2. RWE: Journals, II, 278. December 13, 1829.
 3. Mill, J.S., Mill on Bentham and Coleridge (London, 1950), 40. Originally from Mill's Dissertations and Discussions, volume I.
 4. RWE: Journals, II, 334.

beast," he told his congregation, "this conscience, this Reason,--by what-
ever name it is honored is the Presence of God to man."¹ By this time he
had assimilated the meaning of the distinction, if not yet all of the terms.
But he was not yet ready to call it "a philosophy itself."²

The Edinburgh Review of March, 1831 contained another anonymous
article by Carlyle on German Literature, this one a review of W. Taylor's
Historic Survey of German Poetry. Carlyle here used the distinction between
Reason and Understanding, as he often did, as a standard of criticism. The
distinction is not mentioned as such, but much of what he said presupposed
its existence. Taylor, it appears, was incapable of understanding the
German mind; his "whole Philosophy is sensual; that is, he recognizes no-
thing that cannot be weighed, measured, and, with one or the other organ,
eaten and digested. Logic is his only lamp of life; where this fails, the
region of Creation terminates. For him there is no Invisible, Incompre-
hensible; whosoever, under any name, believes in an Invisible, he treats,
with leniency and the loftiest tolerance, as a mystic and a lunatic."³
For this reason, essentially, Carlyle dismissed Taylor's survey as super-
ficial.

The December, 1831 number of the Edinburgh Review held Carlyle's
famous essay "Characteristics." Again, as with all of his early essays,
it was anonymous. Emerson probably read the essay during the Spring of

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1. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, XXV. From sermon "God in the Soul."
 2. RWE: Letters, I, 412. To Edward Bliss Emerson, May 31, 1834.
 3. TC: Works, XXVII, 359.

1832 and was, it seems, enthusiastic about it.¹ To attempt to summarize this essay would be presumptuous, for only in its entirety can it be understood. And yet we can look at some of the main ideas. The starting point and connecting theme of the essay is the concept that "the great, the creative and enduring is ever a secret to itself; only the small, the barren and transient is otherwise."² Carlyle pressed this truth into "innumerable . . . ramifications,"³ pointing up its universal importance.⁴

Underlying Carlyle's whole position was the distinction between Reason and Understanding, again seldom mentioned but always present. One example will suffice.

Manufacture is intelligible, but trivial; Creation is great, and cannot be understood. Thus if the Debater and Demonstrator, whom we may rank as the lowest of true thinkers, knows what he has done, and how he did it, the Artist, whom we rank as the highest, knows not; must speak of Inspiration, and in one or the other dialect, call his work the gift of a divinity. . . .

The healthy Understanding, we should say, is not the

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1. The December issue of the Edinburgh Review was not published until January. (See TC: Letters of Thomas Carlyle, edited by Norton, C.E., London, 1888, I, 387.) In conversation with Alexander Ireland in Edinburgh (August, 1833) Emerson said that "Characteristics" particularly had struck him. (See Ireland, A., Ralph Waldo Emerson, London, 1882, p. 147). (See also RWE: Letters, I, 394. To Alexander Ireland, August 30, 1833).
 2. TC: Works, XXVIII, 18.
 3. TC: Works, XXVIII, 16.
 4. In time Emerson assimilated this idea and reproduced it from his own thinking. For example: "The arts languish now because all their scope is exhibition; when they originated, it was to serve the Gods Now they are mere flourishes." (RWE: Journals, III, 501, 1835). "He builded better than he knew." (RWE: Works, IX, 7). "Shakspeare made his Hamlet as a bird weaves its nest. . . . The masters painted for joy, and knew not that virtue had gone out of them." (RWE: Works, VII, 182).

Logical, argumentative, but the Intuitive; for the end of Understanding is not to prove and find reasons, but to know and believe . . . the man of logic and the man of insight; the Reasoner and the Discoverer, or even Knower, are quite separable,--indeed, for the most part, quite separate characters.¹

"Characteristics", as I shall point out later, was one of the main channels for Carlyle's influence upon Emerson.²

The Foreign Quarterly Review of April, 1833 printed Carlyle's essay "Diderot", which Emerson read, if not during his trip to Europe (January to September, 1833), sometime before November, 1834.³ In "Diderot" Carlyle again used the distinction as a standard of criticism, this time for Diderot and French Philosophy in general. "Diderot's habitual world," he wrote, "is a half world, distorted into looking like a whole; it is properly, a poor, fractional, insignificant world; partial, inaccurate, perverted from end to end. Alas, it was the destiny of the man to live as

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1. TC: Works, XXVIII, 5-6. The last sentence is another way of saying Coleridge's "They differ in kind." (quoted above). Carlyle used here the term "healthy Understanding" to connote what he, Coleridge, and the German transcendentalists called Reason.
 2. Aside from his mention of "Characteristics" to Ireland, Emerson wrote of it in his journal of 1834 (RWE: Journals, III, 294) and a letter of 1835 (RWE: Letters, I, 432). Carlyle's quotation from Novalis, "'Already', says a deep Thinker, with more meaning than will disclose itself at once, 'my opinion, my conviction, gains infinitely in strength and sureness, the moment a second mind has adopted it.'" (TC: Works, XXVIII, 11), appealed to Emerson, and he made use of it in terms that make his source in Carlyle certain. See RWE: Journals, III, 466 (April 12, 1835); Letters, I, 371 (March 23, 1833).
 3. See Holmes, G.W., Ralph Waldo Emerson, 79. Letter to James Freeman Clarke, November 25, 1834, where Emerson mentions Carlyle's "Diderot." Although this is Emerson's first mention of the essay, it is probable that he read it soon after it was published.

a Polemic; to be born also in the morning tide and first splendour of the Mechanical Era; not to know, with the smallest assurance or continuance, that in the Universe other than mechanical meaning could exist."¹ As before, however, Carlyle was using the distinction without making a direct reference to it.

Finally, Sartor Resartus, which Emerson read in Fraser's Magazine during 1834, presupposed the validity of the distinction. And although by that time the distinction had become a part of Emerson's thought, its underlying presence in Sartor Resartus, whose author he now knew personally, must have strengthened his conviction.

In 1834 he began actively to use the distinction. His letter to his brother Edward, quoted at length above (page 28), pointed to it as the distinction of Milton, Coleridge, and the Germans. The reference to Coleridge is clear and has already been discussed. As for the distinction in Milton Emerson undoubtedly had in mind Paradise Lost, Book V, lines 485-488:

To intellectual, give both life and sense, *Paradise and*
Fancie and understanding, whence the Soule
Reason receives, and reason is her being,
Discursive, or Intuitive.

But that he perceived the distinction directly from a reading of the poem is highly improbable. Both Stewart and Coleridge pointed to this passage as an example,² and from them, presumably, Emerson learned of Milton's concept. The reference to the Germans involves Carlyle, for Carlyle was

1. TC: Works, XXVIII, 228.

2. See Stewart, Dugald, Collected Works (edited by William Hamilton, Edinburgh, 1854-1860), III, 13. And Coleridge, S.T., Biographia Literaria (Oxford, 1907), I, 109; and The Friend (London, 1818), I, 266.

the medium through which German ideas, with but one or two exceptions, came to Emerson. More will be said of this later.

In an undated journal entry, probably written in 1834 or 1835,¹ Emerson wrote of "The first Philosophy", in which the distinction between Reason and Understanding played an essential role. A long quotation is necessary.

The first Philosophy, that of mind, is the science of what is, in distinction from what appears. It is one mark of its laws that their enunciation awakens the feelings of the moral sublime, and great men are they who believe in them. They resemble great circles in astronomy, each of which, in whatsoever direction it be drawn, contains the whole sphere. So each of these seems to imply all truth. These laws are Ideas of the Reason, and so are obeyed easier than expressed. They astonish the Understanding, and seem to it gleams of a world in which we do not live.

Our compound nature differences us from God, but our Reason is not to be distinguished from the divine Essence. We have yet devised no words to designate the attributes of God which can adequately stand for the universality and perfection of our own intuitions. To call the Reason "ours" or "Human" seems an impertinence, so absolute and unconfined it is. The best we can say of God, we mean of the mind as it is known to us. Thus when we say,

"The gods approve

The depth, but not the tumult of the soul

(A fervent, not ungovernable love),"

The sublime in the sentiment is, that to the soul itself depth, not tumult, is desirable. When you say (Socrates said it), "Jupiter prefers integrity to charity," your

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1. Some of the passage seems to have been copied from an earlier journal entry. See RWE: Journals, II, 508-9 (August 19, 1832). The tone of the passage, however, and especially the mention of Reason and Understanding tend to date it as 1834 or 1835. See Pochmann, Henry A., op. cit.

finest meaning is the "soul prefers," etc. When Jesus saith, "Who giveth one of these little ones a cup of cold water shall not lose his reward," is not the best meaning the love at which the giver has arrived? And so on throughout the New Testament there is not a volition attributed to God considered as an external cause but gains in truth and dignity by being referred to the soul.

Reason, seeing in objects their remote effects, affirms the effect as the permanent character. The Understanding, listening to Reason, on the one side, which says It is, and to the senses on the other side, which says It is not, takes the middle ground and declares It will be. Heaven is the projection of the Ideas of Reason on the plane of the Understanding.

Jesus Christ was a minister of the pure Reason. The beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount are all utterances of the mind contemning the phenomenal world. "Blessed are the righteous poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men revile you," etc. The Understanding can make nothing of it. 'Tis all nonsense. The Reason affirms its absolute verity.

Various terms are employed to indicate the counteraction of the Reason and the Understanding, with more or less precision, according to the cultivation of the speaker. A clear perception of it is the key to all Theology, and a theory of human life. St. Paul marks the distinction by the terms natural man and spiritual man.

When Novalis says, "It is the instinct of the Understanding to counteract the Reason," he only translates into a scientific formula the sentence of St. Paul "The Carnal mind is enmity against God."¹

He had by this time taken the distinction into his own mind and was using it as his own peculiar instrument, not merely as the distinction of Milton, Coleridge, and the Germans. There are numerous other examples of Emerson's

1. RWE: Journals, III, 235-237. The quotation which Emerson attributes to Novalis is from Carlyle's essay "Novalis" where Carlyle quoted Jacobi (TC: Works, XXVII, 27) Emerson's mistake is understandable. See above page 35.

use of Reason and Understanding, but to go into them here would be extraneous to my problem.

So far I have pointed out that between 1821 and 1835 Emerson's thought moved toward and finally assimilated the distinction between Reason and Understanding. I have also shown that in this development he was acted upon by various outside forces as well as by his own nature. Again, we have seen that during the years 1827 to 1833, Carlyle, in his anonymous essays, was mentioning and more often using the distinction as an ally in his battle against the mechanistic logic of his day. And we know that Emerson read many of these essays and sometimes reread them. I have as yet, however, only hinted at the connection between Emerson's reading of Carlyle and his ultimate appropriation of the distinction between Reason and Understanding. Now I shall be more specific.

It is quite certain that Emerson learned of the definitions and details of the distinction from his reading of Coleridge, beginning late in 1829. From no other source did the distinction spring forth so clearly and so abundantly. And even though Coleridge had borrowed from Kant and the post-Kantian thinkers of Germany, it was the Coleridgean distinction, ultimately, which Emerson adopted.¹ This does not mean, however, that Coleridge was the only or necessarily the strongest force in directing Emerson's thought in this matter.

The trend in recent scholarship has been increasingly to see the

1. This is an accepted opinion and need not be argued. For details, see Cameron, K.W., Emerson the Essayist, I, 79-90.

close connection between Coleridge and Emerson. The reason for this is clear. A comparison of Coleridge's works--particularly The Friend, Aids to Reflection, and Biographia Literaria--and Emerson's journals, letters, and early works shows a marked similarity in thought and even in the use of terms.¹ Indeed, Emerson had learned much from his 1829-30 reading of Coleridge. But that Emerson accepted Coleridgean terms and ideas is not the important point. Why he accepted them is. It is clear that he did not accept them because of their inherent strength. In 1826, perhaps as early as 1819,² Emerson had seen Biographia Literaria, and possibly in 1827 Aids to Reflection.³ At these earlier times the same ideas which in 1830 were to become so vital to him drew no comments from him. Why? The answer is clear; between 1826 and 1830 Emerson had been unconsciously prepared for Coleridge. And so the same Coleridgean ideas which Emerson found meaningless in 1826-7 were deeply meaningful to the Emerson of 1830. For he had changed. To catagorize all of the innumerable factors that caused this change would be impossible. For the present it is enough to say that Carlyle was a part of it.

For an example of this change in Emerson I return to the distinction between Reason and Understanding. Presumably Emerson read of the

1. See Cameron, K.W., op. cit., I, 78-223.

2. The charging list of the Boston Library Society indicates that Biographia Literaria was withdrawn by a member of the Emerson family (not necessarily Ralph) on March 25, 1819, and returned two days later. (Cabot, J.E., Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson, I, 241). On November 16, 1826, Emerson borrowed the book from the Harvard College Library. (Cameron, K.W., Emerson's Reading, 46).

3. See above page 17, note 3.

distinction in 1826 in Biographia Literaria. But if he did (and it seems likely), the distinction came to him as a meaningless play on words, for it was not yet relevant to the whole of his experience. By itself (Coleridge tended to discuss it in abstraction) the distinction meant little to Emerson. But later he took the distinction as his own when it was given a frame of reference, a pragmatic biographical use, a valid purpose. This something extra was Carlyle's addition.

Carlyle's fundamental concern was with the world of men; ideas in themselves meant little to him. The fine details which Coleridge was ^owant to discuss, he had little appreciation for. And so whereas Coleridge was constantly defining and discussing the distinction per se but seldom using it pragmatically, Carlyle was often making use of it but seldom mentioning it.

The important point here is this. Emerson, much as he was an airy transcendentalist, was also very much a pragmatist.¹ And as a study of his sources will show, he was more stimulated by the vindication of ideas in life than by the ideas themselves. This is, of course, only a generalization reached by looking back over his work and hence is not a tight rule binding every context. Nevertheless, this generalization is certainly valid in Emerson's assimilation of the distinction between Reason and

1. As George Woodberry points out in his excellent critical biography, Emerson "leaves a double image upon the mind that has dwelt long upon his memory." (Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1). He was often both sides of the coin, a Neo-Platonic mystic and at the same time an intellectual forerunner of John Dewey and William James. (See Carpenter, F.I., "William James and Emerson" in American Literature, vol. 11, no. 1, March, 1939, 39-57)

Understanding. Again and again from 1827 to 1833 Emerson was confronted with the distinction. Seldom was it specifically mentioned, but it was used and the putting of it to use was far more important to Emerson than the academic discussion and definitions of terms. The general laws, though vague and undefined, were vital to Emerson, but not the metaphysical foundation which supported them. In his mind the general laws had to precede the detailed foundations. And so before he could appropriate Coleridge's distinction (which he did), he had already to believe it as a general, though vague, truth. It was largely, but not only, through Carlyle with his repeated use of the distinction that Emerson came to believe the general law behind the distinction between Reason and Understanding. Coleridge was the dictionary, valuable but still secondary.

CHAPTER III

THREE RELATED IDEAS

Emerson's 1831 revelation of God within was, as I pointed out earlier, his spiritual rebirth; his split with the Church the following year was little more than the outward manifestation of this inward change. And yet this break from the ministry was not wholly the result of the earlier revelation. The idea of God in the soul could have remained inactive and no more than an idea; in the light of Emerson's early years, it might well have done so. But contemporary with the revelation there came to Emerson, largely through Carlyle, an activating force which pushed Emerson to the logical conclusion of the belief in the immanence of God in man. I shall now examine three related Carlylean ideas which effected the outward acts of 1832 and, to a lesser degree, the inward changes of 1831. These ideas are closely connected with the distinction between Reason and Understanding and, in fact, grew to maturity in Emerson's mind along with it. They are part of the Romantic impact upon Emerson.

A. Man and his Circumstances: Wealth and Genius.

Most closely connected with the distinction between Reason and Understanding is the idea that there is no necessary relationship between circumstances (wealth and social status) and genius, or, in a larger sense, man is not, or at least should not be, bound by the chance set of conditions into which he is born. The Understanding, according to Carlyle, can be developed through practice and education. Thus, the artisan or man of talent is taught to do his task. Reason, on the other hand, can not be

forced; it is innate; and no amount of training will add to it or lack of training detract from it. Thence the man of genius, genius being utterly dependent upon Reason, is not bound by the limitations of circumstances. He can arise just as easily and as frequently from the lower and uneducated classes as from the aristocracy. To Emerson this idea was never central, but it was important and, as I shall point out, a part of the guide which carried him through the turbulent years, 1830 to 1833.

Carlyle was not the first to present this idea to Emerson; it was, in fact, part of Emerson's thinking before he read "Richter" late in 1827. ~~In the summer of that year he wrote in his journal,~~

The man who bates no jot of courage when oppressed by fate, who, missing of his design, lays hold with ready hand on the unexpected event, and turns it to his own account, and in the cruelest suffering has that generosity of perception that he is sensible of a secret joy in the addition this event makes to his knowledge,--that man is truly independent,--"he takes his revenge on fortune"--is independent of time and chance; fortune may rule his circumstances, but he overrules fortune. The stars cannot thwart with evil influences the progress of such a soul to grandeur.¹

About this same time he wrote to his brother Edward, "I do not adopt the cant of the pupilage of circumstances. Yet I must venture on the repetition of an ancient truism that every man's character depends in great part upon the scope & occasions that have been afforded him for its development. That the Mind is something to be unfolded & will disclose some faculties more & some less just in proportion to the room & excitements

1. RWE: Journals, II, 212-3. June 29, 1827. Emerson added to this passage, "See Taylor's Holy Living, doubtless a reference to Rules for Holy Living by Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)."

for action that are furnished it."¹ He rejected the "pupilage of circumstances", a part of the mechanistic view of the universe, and yet he could not deny a place to circumstances in the development of an individual. He still felt weak under the burden of Time and Chance.

Carlyle first wrote of this idea in his "State of German Literature", which as far as can be determined was read by Emerson early in 1828.²

Is it, then so certain that taste and riches are indissolubly connected? That truth of feeling must ever be preceded by weight of purse, and the eyes be dim for universal and eternal Beauty, till they have long rested on gilt walls and costly furniture? To the great body of mankind this were heavy news; for, of the thousand, scarcely one is rich, or connected with the rich; nine hundred and ninety-nine have always been poor, and must always be so We think that, for acquiring true poetic taste, riches, or association with the rich, are distinctly among the minor requisites; that, in fact, they have little or no concern with the matter. . . .

The charms of Nature, the majesty of Man, the infinite loveliness of Truth and Virtue, are not hidden from the eye of the poor; but from the eye of the vain, the corrupted and self-seeking, be he poor or rich. . . . Nor is there still any aristocratic monopoly of judgment more than genius.³

Carlyle's article, "Life of Heyne", appeared in the October, 1828, number of the Foreign Review, but again it is not certain when Emerson read it.⁴ Heyne, the essay said, had arisen out of poverty and hardship,

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1. RWE: Letters, I, 220. The date of the MS is unknown, but through internal evidence it is thought to have been written between 1825 and 1828 with 1827 the most probable date.
 2. See above page 31.
 3. TC: Works, XXVI, 40. This quotation is but a small part of the whole written on the same idea in this essay.
 4. In 1835 Emerson mentioned the Foreign Review as a vehicle for Carlyle's writings. See RWE: Letters, I, 432.

and this

is another of the proofs, which minds like his are from time to time sent hither to give, that the man is not the product of his circumstances, but that, in a far higher degree, the circumstances are the product of the man. While benefited clerks and the other sleek philosophers, reclining on their cushions of velvet, are demonstrating that to make a scholar and man of taste, there must be cooperation of the upper classes, society of gentlemen-commoners, and an income of four hundred a year; --arises the son of a Chemnitz weaver, and with the very wind of his stroke sweeps them from the scene. Let no man doubt the omnipotence of Nature, doubt the majesty of man's soul; let no lonely unfriended son of genius despair! Let him not despair; if he have the will, the right will, then the power also has not been denied him. It is but the artichoke that will not grow except in gardens. The acorn is cast carelessly abroad into the wilderness, yet it rises to be an oak; on the wild soil it nourishes itself, it defies the tempest, and lives for a thousand years.¹

Carlyle's famous review of Lockhart's Life of Burns appeared in December, 1828, in the Edinburgh Review, and presumably Emerson read it early in 1829.² In this anonymous essay Carlyle pointed to Burns' background and said,

We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite for the existence of a poet. Sometimes it is a certain kind of training; he must have studied certain things, studied for instance 'the elder dramatists', and so learned a poetic language; as if poetry lay in the tongue, not in the heart. . . .

Is not every genius an impossibility till he appear? Why do we call him new and original, if we saw where his marble was lying, and what fabric he could rear from it? It is not the material but the workman that is wanting.³

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1. TC: Works, XXVI, 353-4.
 2. On January 23, 1835, Emerson mentioned "Burns" as one of Carlyle's works. See RWE: Letters, I, 432.
 3. TC: Works, XXVI, 272-3. Compare to Emerson's Journals, II, 521. (October 14, 1832): "A man must teach himself because that which each can do best, none but his maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master that could have taught Shakspeare?"



In "Signs of the Times" (Edinburgh Review, June, 1829), Carlyle wrote of the same concept, this time opposing it to the mechanistic view of life.

Speak to any small man of a high, majestic Reformation, of a high majestic Luther; and forthwith he sets about 'accounting' for it; how the 'circumstances of the Time' called for such a character, and found him, we suppose, standing girt and road-ready, to do its errand; . . . how, in short, this small man, had he been there, could have performed the like himself! For it is the 'force of circumstances' that does everything; the force of one man can do nothing. No; all this is grounded on little more than a metaphor. We figure Society as a 'Machine', and that mind is opposed to mind, as body is to body; whereby two, or at most ten, little minds must be stronger than one great mind. Notable absurdity!¹

In such a passage the basic unity of Carlyle's thought becomes more apparent. I leave this idea now, content with showing merely that Carlyle, in his own forceful way, was giving voice to it. I shall return to it when I look more closely at Emerson in 1832.

B. Be Genuine.

If man is to rise above his circumstances, what should be his guide? Both Carlyle and Emerson had a similar answer, which depended ultimately upon their faith in divine Reason (or God within). In being wholly genuine, according to Carlyle and Emerson, man is obeying the highest law he is capable of obeying. "Trust theyself:" Emerson wrote in "Self-Reliance", "every heart vibrates to that iron string."²

But this radical self-trust, important as it was to the mature

1. TC: Works, XXVI, 75.

2. RWE: Works, II, 47.

Emerson, was not always a part of his thinking. In 1822 his aunt Mary chided him for his lack of it. In a letter which shows the connection between the concepts of Man and Circumstances and Be Genuine, she wrote,

You are not inspired at heart because you are the nursling of surrounding circumstances. You become yourself a part of the events which make up ordinary life. . . .

Solitude, which to people not talented to deviate from the beaten track is the safe ground of mediocrity (without offending), is to learning and genius the only sure labyrinth, though sometimes gloomy, to form the eagle-wing that will bear one farther than suns and stars. Byron and Wordsworth have there best and only intensely burnished their pens. Would to Providence your unfoldings might be there! --that it were not a wild and fruitless wish that you could be disunited from travelling with the souls of other men; of living and breathing, reading and writing, with one vital, time-fated idea, their opinions.¹

Obviously Aunt Mary was a strong source of this idea in Emerson.

Another early and important source of this idea was William Ellery Channing. Through his Harvard days Emerson and his brothers went out of their ways to listen to the lectures and sermons of the Unitarian leader. Perhaps it was his eloquence rather than his message that most attracted them, but none the less they eagerly heard what he had to say. A single example of this idea in Channing will be sufficient. In his The Moral Arguments against Calvinism (1820) he said, "The ultimate reliance of a human being is and must be on his own mind. . . . Conscience . . . is

1. Cabot, J.E., A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson, I, 78, 83. Mary Moody Emerson to RWE, June 14, 1822. The letter is dated "Friday, 14, 1822", but that it was June is certain. The letter was in answer to one of June 10, 1822, and in 1822, June 14 was a Friday.

the highest faculty given us by God, the whole foundation of our responsibility, and our sole capacity for religion."¹

Sampson Reed was a third early but less important source. In his Oration on Genius (1821), Reed claimed that "Every man has a form of mind peculiar to himself. . . . He is bent in a particular direction."² From this he hinted that this individuality need only be expanded for the single man to fulfil his purpose.

Out of these varying sources Emerson's own self-reliance was to grow. In the summer of 1827, echoing Aunt Mary's earlier plea, Emerson wrote to her, ". . . if men would avoid that general language & general manner in which they strive to hide all that is peculiar and would say only what was uppermost in their own minds after their own individual manner, every man would be interesting."³

By this time a similar idea had developed in Carlyle. In "Richter" (June, 1827), his first contribution to the Edinburgh Review, Carlyle wrote,

. . . the great law of culture is: Let each become all that he was created capable of being; expand, if possible, to his full growth; resisting all impediments, casting off all foreign, especially all noxious adhesions; and show himself at length in his own shape and stature, be these what they may. There is no uniform of excellence, either in physical or spiritual Nature: all genuine things are what they ought to be. The reindeer is good and beautiful, so likewise is the elephant. In Literature it is the same:

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1. Channing, W.E., Works (Centennial Edition, London and Edinburgh, 1880), 373, 375.
 2. Reed, Sampson, "Genius", in Aesthetic Papers, edited by Elizabeth P. Peabody (Boston, 1849), 58-59.
 3. RWE: Letters, I, 207. August 17, 1827.

'every man', says Lessing, 'has his own style, like his own nose.' True, there are noses of wonderful dimensions; but no nose can justly be amputated by the public . . . so it be a real nose, and no wooden one put on for deception's sake and mere show!¹

This was no passing reference to a momentary idea. A profound, at times worshipful, respect for genuineness was one of the characteristics of Carlyle. In his next essay, "The State of German Literature" (Edinburgh Review, October, 1827), he claimed that imitation is among the deadliest of poetical sins.²

Then a year later in his review of Lockhart's Life of Burns (Edinburgh Review, December, 1828), Carlyle connected Burns' excellence with his sincerity, and added,

This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. . . . To every poet, to every writer, we might say: Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him.³

In 1830 under the stimulus of Coleridge's The Friend and Aids to Reflection, Emerson's thought quickened, and with this his self-reliance expanded. For Coleridge, as later for Emerson, self-trust was closely tied to the belief of God within. In The Friend, Coleridge had written,

1. TC: Works, XXVI, 19.

2. See TC: Works, XXVI, 70.

3. TC: Works, XXVI, 268. This respect for genuineness accounts in part for Carlyle's attraction to men who, like J.S. Mill, Edward Irving, John Sterling, and Emerson, had little spiritual and intellectual compatibility with him. Their single common tie was genuineness, and that in large part, was what attracted Carlyle to them.

"Nature has irrevocably decreed that our prime dependence . . . must be on our own minds."¹

During June and July the concept of self-trust was becoming increasingly important to Emerson. ". . . men fail," he wrote in his journal, "as far as they leave their native moral instincts in the admiration of other characters. Let them on the contrary have greater confidence in the plan, yet to them unknown, which the moral Architect has traced for them."² In September he added a long passage on self-reliance, of which I shall quote but one thought: ". . . the more exclusively idiosyncratic a man is, the more general and infinite he is . . . it is when a man does not listen to himself, but to others, that he is depraved and misled."³

Three months later this idea became the basis for a sermon. In "Trust Yourself" (December 3, 1830), taking sentences directly from his journal entries of July and September, he advocated a radical self-reliance. ". . . if you act out yourself," he told his congregation, "you will attain and exhibit a perfect character."⁴ Always conscious that this self-reliance might degenerate into godless self-will, he added,

In listening more intently to our own soul we are not becoming in the ordinary sense more selfish, but are departing farther from what is low and falling back upon truth and upon God. For the whole value of the soul depends on the fact that it contains a divine principle,

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1. Coleridge, S.T., Complete Works, edited by Professor Shedd, New York, 1853, II, 374.
 2. RWE: Journals, II, 301. July 20, 1830.
 3. RWE: Journals, II, 310-11. September 27, 1830.
 4. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, 106. For parallel passages between the journals and sermon, see: Journals, II, 301 and Young Emerson Speaks, 107; and Journals, II, 310 and Young Emerson Speaks, 108 and 110.

that it is a house of God, and the voice of the eternal inhabitant may always be heard within it.¹

In his poem Know Thyself (July 6, 1831) this idea became even more closely tied to the idea of the immanence of God in man.

Thou art thyself a law,
And since the soul of things is in thee,
Thou needest nothing out of thee.²

By this time Emerson's thinking on self-reliance was clear to him. But it had not yet been put to any thorough test. That was forthcoming, to be sure, during 1832, a year I shall study closely in the next chapter.

C. Act.

A corollary to Carlyle's emphasis upon genuineness was his stress on work and action. "Between vague wavering Capability and fixed indubitable Performance, what a difference!"³ he wrote in Sartor Resartus, and earlier in "Signs of the Times" (Edinburgh Review, June, 1829) he was more specific. "Our grand business undoubtedly is, not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand."⁴ By his own admission Emerson was a seer and not a doer,⁵ and at a superficial glance, it might seem that an emphasis upon action could not have effected him. And yet this idea, combined with the other two, was integral to the development of the mature Emerson, as will be made clear in the next chapter.

The environment of a young and largely rural New England had

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1. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, 110.
 2. RWE: Journals, II, 397. See above page 19.
 3. TC: Works, I, 132.
 4. TC: Works, XXVII, 56.
 5. RWE: Journals, IV, 370-1.

instilled in Emerson a respect for the man of action. The man who could build or sail a ship, the farmer ploughing his fields and reaping a harvest, the weaver and bootmaker seemed infinitely more valuable than the solitary thinker. Also, however, Emerson had been born into the literary class of New England and was expected to work, not with his hands, but with his mind. While he told his congregation that we must judge other men "only by their actions"¹ and that "virtue exists only in action",² he could believe with Plato that "Action comes less near to vital truth than description."³ Emerson never stressed mere action to the extent that Carlyle did, nor did he go to the other extreme of placing value exclusively in isolated thought; in this case his was the middle road. But at a time in Emerson's life when an active manifestation of his mind seemed all important to his development, Carlyle repeatedly stated that "Everywhere in life, the true question is, not what we gain, but what we do . . . it is not what we receive, but what we are made to give, that chiefly contents and profits us."⁴ The connection between Carlyle's plea to action and Emerson's life will become clear in the next chapter.

1. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, 1. October 15, 1826.

2. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, 13. August 27, 1827. This sermon Emerson preached more times (27) than any other.

3. RWE: Journals, II, 439. December 20, 1831. Quoted from Plato's Republic, book V.

4. TC: Works, XXVI, 150. From "Goethe's Helena" (Foreign Review, April, 1828). Again, exactly when Emerson read this essay is uncertain. He included the essay's title in his list of Carlyle's works which he made in April, 1837. For this list see Appendix B.

CHAPTER IV

1832

The decisive year in the life of Emerson was 1832, for during that single year he made his break from the tradition in which he had been raised, and in so doing settled, to a large degree, the general direction in which his subsequent life was to go. An understanding of that year is essential to an understanding of Emerson.

Before discussing the events of 1832, I must glance at Emerson as a churchman. He was descendent from eight generations of ministers, and it was expected, quite naturally, that one of the Emerson boys would carry on the tradition. The eldest, William, had gone off (against the advice of respected churchmen) to theological studies in Germany; but the foreign influence changed his thinking and he returned home to go into law. Ralph Waldo was next, and he, too, chose the ministry. He chose it, however, rather for lack of anything better than in answer to a distinct calling.

Contemporary Unitarian preaching (except that of Channing) was too academic for his Puritan tastes. "The light of Christianity," he wrote to a friend, "seems to be somewhat lost . . . with the flood of knowledge and genius poured out upon our pulpits."¹ With the hope, then, that I-will-be-different young Emerson took up his theological studies at Harvard, the fountain of liberalism. Poor health and weak eyesight,

1. RWE: Letters, I, 127-8. January 3, 1823.

however, made his studies spasmodic, and in 1826 he was licensed to preach, more perhaps out of respect for his family tradition than because of any merit on his part. He certainly did not have the background in theology and metaphysics which his new position required. And instead of trying to fill this void he was drawn further into literature and philosophy, both of which were more attractive to him. His sermons were conscientiously good, but they were ethical and moral essays rather than religious discourses. And in his pastoral duties he remained a blundering novice, incapable of much warm connection with his congregation. He was ill-prepared and in a sense ill-suited for the ministry.

This misfitting was not, however, the fundamental cause for his quitting the church; it only assisted, once the deeper cause had become strong. "I count it the great object of my life to explore the nature of God,"¹ he told his congregation in 1830, but already he was finding the confines of the church a restriction on his quest. "Calvinism," he wrote in his journal, "stands, fear I, by pride and ignorance; and Unitarianism, as a sect, stands by the opposition of Calvinism. It is cold and cheerless, the mere creature of the understanding, until controversy makes it warm with fire got from below."² And neither Calvinism nor Unitarianism allowed him the mental leg-room he needed to reach his full height.

His unrest in his position came to a head in 1832. On January 10, conscious of the embryonic stirrings of revolt within him, Emerson

1. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, 72. April 4, 1830.

2. RWE: Journals, II, 424. October 27, 1831.

wrote in his journal,

It is the best part of the man, I sometimes think, that revolts most against his being a minister. His good revolts from official goodness. If he never spoke or acted but with the full consent of his understanding, if the whole man acted always, how powerful would be every act and every word. Well then, or ill then, how much power he sacrifices by conforming himself to say and do in other folks' time instead of in his own! The difficulty is that we do not make a world of our own, but fall into institutions already made, and have to accommodate ourselves to them to be useful at all, and this accommodation is, I say, a loss of so much integrity and, of course, of so much power.¹

All three of the Carlylean ideas which were looked at in the last chapter are vital to this passage, which, in the light of Emerson's subsequent break from the church, takes on a paramount importance.

By the end of January he became even more specific in pointing toward the future. To his journal he confided,

Every man hath his use, no doubt, and everyone makes ever the effort according to the energy of his character to suit his external condition to his inward constitution. If his external condition does not admit of such accommodation, he breaks the form of his life, and enters a new one which does.²

The following Sunday, Emerson preached his sermon, "Find Your Calling", which, to a congregation unaware of his mental struggles, seemed impersonal. "I submit it to your thoughts," he told them,

whether there be not reason to think that every man is born with a peculiar character or having a peculiar determination to some one pursuit or one sort of usefulness. If he cultivates his powers and affections,

1. RWE: Journals, II, 448-9.

2. RWE: Journals, II, 457. January 30, 1832.

this determination will presently appear. If he does not, he will yield to those influences under which he just happens to fall; but as his character opens, there will be this constant effort on the part of his mind to bend his circumstances to his character. Hence we continually see men of strong character changing the nature of the profession in their hands. . . . Let a man have that profession for which God formed him that he may be useful to mankind to the whole extent of his powers, that he may find delight in the exercise of his powers, and do what he does with the full consent of his own mind.¹

Here again the three Carlylean doctrines come forth as a part of Emerson's thought.

By February his direction seemed clear, but the hardest task still lay ahead, the task of doing what his Reason dictated. Family pressure (especially from Aunt Mary) and thoughts of a loss of dignity clouded his vision. For a time it seemed that he might give in to them. "He suffers," his brother Charles wrote, "like most ministers from being too much sheltered and treading too uniform a track--there is danger of growing exclusive and fastidious and losing some faculties of action."² The young clergyman would have agreed with his brother's observation. But the real trouble lay much deeper; more than ever Emerson was feeling the walls of the church constricting his search for truth. "Truth never is; always is a-being,"³ he copied into his journal from the current issue of the Edinburgh Review. He, too, must be a-being to succeed, even partially,

1. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, 165-6. February 5, 1832.

2. MS letter Charles Emerson to William Emerson, May 29, 1832. Cited in Rusk, R. L., The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 160.

3. RWE: Journals, II, 481. May 12, 1832.

in his quest.

The aphorism on Truth Emerson found in an anonymous article "Characteristics",¹ one of Carlyle's more famous essays. In reading this essay, Emerson must have felt the general trend of his recent thinking confirmed. Here was a voice, albeit distant and unknown, which strengthened his vague but deep convictions. Carlyle had taken the physician's maxim that "the healthy know not of their own health, but only the sick,"² and applied it in a wide sense to all of life. ". . . the Perfect, the Great," he had written, "is a mystery to itself, knows not itself; whatsoever does know itself is already little, and more or less imperfect."³ The present time, he went on, with its Utilitarians and Pyrrhonists, everywhere "painfully 'listens to itself';"⁴ it counts its steps and looks back to measure its stride. Emerson's deep concern at this time, Religion and the Church, came under Carlyle's wrath. "Religion, like all else," he asserted, "is conscious of itself, listens to itself; it becomes less and less creative, vital; more and more mechanical."⁵ In all of its manifestations the present age was sick, and yet Carlyle did not leave his reader without hope. In concluding the essay, he wrote,

Remarkable it is, truly, how everywhere the eternal fact begins again to be recognized, that there is a Godlike in human affairs; that God not only made us and beholds us, but is in us and around us; that the Age of Miracles, as it ever was, now is The genius of Mechanism . . . will not

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1. See TC: Works, XXVIII, 38.
 2. TC: Works, XXVIII, 1.
 3. Ibid., 16.
 4. Ibid., 22.
 5. Ibid., 23.

always sit like a choking incubus on our soul; but at length, when by a new magic Word the old spell is broken, become our slave, and as familiar-spirit do all our bidding.¹

Early in the essay Carlyle had quoted Novalis: "'Already', says a deep Thinker, with more meaning than will disclose itself at once, 'my opinion, my conviction, gains infinitely in strength and sureness, the moment a second mind has adopted it.'² And this, basically, was the importance of "Characteristics" to Emerson; it strengthened his recent thinking by confirming it.

But the essay offered more to Emerson than a seconding of his ideas. Here again was Carlyle's doctrine of Action: do what is at hand. "Here on Earth," Carlyle wrote, "we are Soldiers, fighting in a foreign land; that understand not the plan of the campaign, and have no need to understand it; seeing well what is at our hand to be done. Let us do it like Soldiers; with submission, with courage, with a heroic joy. 'Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.'³ In less than a month Emerson was to begin the action that would free him from the church and start him in a new direction.

Early in June, echoing "Characteristics", he wrote in his journal,

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1. Ibid., 42-43.
 2. Ibid., 11. Emerson quoted this passage in 1835 (see Journals, III, 466) and paraphrased it in 1833 (see Letters, I, 371). In "Characteristics" the source of the quotation is not given. In his Heroes and Hero-Worship (1841) Carlyle used the idea again, pointing to Novalis as the source. TC: Works, V, 58. A similar idea accredited to Novalis is found in Sartor Resartus. TC: Works, I, 171.
 3. Ibid., 43. An early example of Carlyle's famous concept of Duty.

I have sometimes thought that, in order to be a good minister, it was necessary to leave the ministry. The profession is antiquated. In an altered age, we worship in the dead forms of our forefathers. Were not a Socratic paganism better than an effete, superannuated Christianity? Whatever there is of Authority in religion is that which the mind does not animate.¹

Then, possibly the same day (the exact date is uncertain), Emerson wrote to the Second Church that he no longer considered the Lord's Supper a sacrament and could not administer it as such.² His disagreement with the administration of the sacrament was a manifestation of the unrest within Emerson and not the cause. It was clear and could be understood by his congregation, whereas not even he understood the abstract ideas at the core of his thought; it made the case.

The Church committee met and decided, as he perhaps hoped it would, that the liberal interpretation could not be accepted in the church. Unless he acquiesced--and the church left the door open for him to do so--a break was inevitable. With six weeks free from his preaching duties while the Church building underwent repairs, he went north to Maine and the New Hampshire mountains to settle his mind. On July 14, the current Edinburgh Review open before him, he copied into his journal: "Imitation is a leaning on something foreign; incompleteness of individual development;

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1. RWE: Journals, II, 491-2. June 2, 1832.
 2. The letter to the Church has been lost and its contents are thus uncertain. The Church's committee, however, reported that the letter stated "a change in his opinions concerning the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and recommend(ed) some change in the mode of administering it." MS report of June 16, 1832. Cited in RWE: Letters, I, 351.

defect of free utterance."¹

This sentence came from an anonymous essay, "Corn-Law Rhymes", by Thomas Carlyle. Through this essay Emerson again heard the confirming voice from across the Atlantic. The Corn-Law Rhymmer, Ebenezer Elliot (1781-1849) was, according to Carlyle, "of that singular class who have something to say . . . not school-learned, or even furnished with pecuniary capital; . . . indeed, a quite unmoneyed, russet-coated speaker; nothing or little other than a Sheffield worker in brass and iron."² Here was a man who could "handle both pen and hammer like a man."³ Genius, the essay went on, has no concern for rank, and "where a genius has been given, a possibility, a certainty of its growing is also given. Yet often it seems as if the injudicious gardening and manuring were worse than none at all; and killed what the inclemencies of blind chance would have spared. We find accordingly that few Fredericks or Napoleons . . . were nursed up with an eye to their vocation."⁴

Comparing the uneducated working classes with the educated classes which did nothing, Carlyle continued:

He that has done nothing has known nothing. Vain

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1. RWE: Journals, II, 493. TC: Works, XXVIII, 154. Incredible as it may seem, a copy of the July issue of the Edinburgh Review, which by June 16th had not been published (see Letters of Thomas Carlyle to John Stuart Mill, John Sterling, and Robert Browning, 10), crossed the Atlantic (usually a seventeen to twenty-five day voyage) to reach Emerson in the isolation of the White Mountains by July 14th. Emerson added to the quotation "Edinburgh Review, no. cx.", making the source certain.
 2. TC: Works, XXVIII, 138.
 3. Ibid., 139.
 4. Ibid., 140. My underline.

is it to sit scheming and plausibly discoursing: up and be doing! If thy knowledge be real, put it forth from thee: grapple with real Nature; try thy theories there, and see how they hold out. Do one thing, for the first time in thy life do a thing; a new light will rise to thee on the doing of all things whatsoever. . . . Once turn to Practice, Error and Truth will no longer consort together.¹

The great excellence of our Rhymers, . . . often hinted at already, [is] that he is genuine. Here is an earnest truth-speaking man; no theorizer, sentimentaliser, but a practical man of work and endeavour, man of sufferance and endurance. The thing that he speaks is not a hearsay, but a thing which he himself has known, and by experience become assured of.²

. . . is not the Corn-Law Rhymers already a king, though a belligerent one; king of his own mind and faculty; and what man in the long run is king of more? Not one in a thousand, even among sceptred kings, is king of so much.³

The same day Emerson read this he wrote in his journal:

How hard to command to soul, or to solicit the soul. Many of our actions, many of mine, are done to solicit the soul. Put away your flesh, put on your faculties. . . . I would be the vehicle of that divine principle that lurks within, and of which life has afforded only glimpses enough to assure me of its being. . . . Truly, whilst it speaketh not, man is a pitiful being. He whistles, eats, sleeps, gets his gun, makes his bargain, lounges, sins, and when all is done is yet wretched. Let the soul speak, and all this drivelling and these toys are thrown aside and man listens like a child.⁴

1. Ibid., 143.

2. Ibid., 145.

3. Ibid., 166.

4. RWE: Journals, II, 493-4. July 14, 1832. It is important to note that the passage quoted here follows in the journals the sentence copied from "Corn-Law Rhymes."

The next day came what Emerson called "The hour of decision",¹ and with a surprising lack of emotion Emerson realized that he had to be genuine or be nothing. He could no longer accommodate himself to the institution into which by chance he had fallen. He, who had been nursed up with an eye to his clerical profession, must leave it to follow his own genius.

To be sure, there was little new to him in "Corn-Law Rhymes"; he had come upon most of its ideas before. But coming to him when it did, when he seemed to be wavering in his decision to leave the Church,² the essay crystallised and confirmed his thinking. In the autumn he wrote of the anonymous essay:

I am cheered and instructed by this paper on Corn Law Rhymes in the Edinburgh by my Germanick new-light writer, whoever he be. He gives us confidence in our principles. He assures the truth-lover everywhere of sympathy. Blessed art that makes books, and so joins me to that stranger by this perfect railroad.³

Returned from his six weeks in the mountains, he was determined to act out himself. "What we say, however trifling," he wrote on August 12th,

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1. Ibid., 496. July 15, 1832.
 2. Charles Emerson, who was with his elder brother for a time in the mountains, felt hope that Emerson might yield a little. On July 6, he wrote: ". . . enough has now been done, (perhaps too much) for the expression of individual opinion, and I hope his own mind will be brought to the persuasion that it is his duty to stay where he is and preach and pray as he has done and administer the ordinance as nearly as he conscientiously can, in accordance with the faith and wishes of his pious parishioners--" Cited in Rusk, R.L., The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 161.
 3. RWE: Journals, II, 515-6. October 1, 1832. This is Emerson's first extant reference to Thomas Carlyle.

"must have its roots in ourselves, or it will not move others."¹ Six days later, using terms that recall "Corn-Law Rhymes, he wrote in his journal:

To be genuine. Goethe, they say, was wholly so. The difficulty increases with the gifts of the individual. A plough-boy can be, but a minister, an orator, an ingenious thinker how hardly! George Fox was. "What I am in words," he said, "I am the same in life." Swendenborg was Whoever is genuine, his ambition is exactly proportioned to his powers. The height of the pinnacle determines the breadth of the base.²

On August 19th, thinking perhaps of a sermon-to-be, he wrote:

Reverence man, and not Plato and Caesar. Whenever there is sense, reflexion, courage, admit it to the same honour,--embrace it, quote it from a truckman as quick as from Webster. If you cannot get the habit of seeing qualities except in the great, if anything new should spring up, it will be lost to you.³

The same day he wrote to Aunt Mary, always one of his closest confidantes:

I remain of the same mind not prepared to eat or drink religiously, tho' it seem a small thing, & seeing no middle way, I apprehend a separation. This, tho' good mature & prudence condemn & possibly something else better than both, yet promises me much contentment & not the less opportunity of usefulness in the very partial & peculiar channel by

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1. Ibid., 505. Compare this with a passage in Carlyle's "Burns" (Edinburgh Review, December, 1828): ". . . let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself." TC: Works, XXVI, 268.
 2. RWE: Journals, II, 506-7. Probably Emerson learned of Goethe's genuineness through Carlyle's essays. See, for example, "Death of Goethe" (New Monthly Magazine, June, 1832): "This man, we may say, became morally great, by being in his own age, what in some other ages many might have been, a genuine man. His grand excellence was this, that he was genuine." TC: Works, XXVII, 383.
 3. RWE: Journals, II, 507.

which I must be useful if at all. --The farthing candle was not made for nothing--the least leaf must ope & grow after the fashion of its own lobes & veins & not after that of the oak or the rose, and I can only do my work well by abjuring the opinions & customs of all others & adhering strictly to the divine plan, a few dim inches of whose outline I faintly discern in my breast. Is that not German enow?¹

This passage is important for two reasons other than that it echoes Carlyle. First, Emerson knew that his most recent thinking sounded German; he knew, in other words, from what source these ideas had come to him. And who but his "Germanick new-light writer" had been the interpreter of German thought? At this time Carlyle was the only one. Second, this letter to Aunt Mary put the controversy about the Lord's Supper in its true perspective--"it seem a small thing."

On September 9th Emerson delivered his sermon on the Lord's Supper.² Jesus never intended that the supper with His disciples should be the foundation for a perpetual institution, he told his congregation, and went on to formulate his Quaker-like objections to the sacrament. Summing up his position in terms that show a concern much deeper than his objection to the rite itself, he said, "It is my desire, in the office of a Christian minister, to do nothing which I cannot do with my whole heart. Having said this, I have said all."³

Several years earlier his elder brother William had asked him a pointed question. ". . . every candid theologian," William had written,

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1. RWE: Letters, I, 354. Compare this last bit to "Corn-Law Rhymes": "The grand result of schooling is a mind with just enough vision to discern, with free force to do." TC: Works, XXVIII, 142.
 2. RWE: Works, XI, 1-25.
 3. Ibid., 24.

"after careful study will find himself wide from the traditional opinions of the bulk of his parishioners. Have you yet settled the question, whether he shall sacrifice his influence or his conscience?"¹ Finally, two days after Emerson had preached his sermon on the Lord's Supper, the answer to William's question was clear: he should sacrifice his influence. On September 11th he wrote his letter of resignation; and on October 28th a meeting of the Church's proprietors, which a number of the pastor's close friends refused to attend, voted by thirty to twenty to accept the resignation but to continue his salary temporarily.

A week earlier he had preached his last sermon as a regular minister. Those who hoped that he might retract his objections to the administering of the Lord's Supper were disappointed, for he brought together the several strains of thought which had been working within him throughout the year. In the sermon, entitled "The Genuine Man", he told them:

There is nothing for the most part less considered than the essential man. The circumstances are much more attended to. Ordinarily when we speak of great men we mean great circumstances. The man is the least part of himself. We hear the wheels of his carriage. We feel the company that walks with him. We read his name often in the newspapers--but him, the soul of him, the praised, the blamed, the enriched, the accompanied, we know not.²

Then he went on to describe the essential or genuine man.

It is the essence of youth of character that a man should follow his own thought; that he should not be accustomed to adopt his motives or modes of action from

1. MS letter of January 17-22, 1825. Cited in RWE: Letters, I, 352.
2. RWE: Young Emerson Speaks, 181. October 21, 1832.

any other but should follow the leading of his own mind like a little child The genuine man is always consistent for he has but one leader. He acts always in character because he acts always from his character. He is accustomed to pay implicit respect to the dictates of his own reason and to obey them without asking why. He therefore speaks what he thinks. He acts his thought. He acts simply and up to the highest motives he knows of.¹

dictation?

He is distinguished by the heartiness with which he gives himself to the affairs that engage his attention, following the advice of the Apostle, himself a high example of this sincerity, 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not as unto men.'²

He continued:

This truth of character is identical with a religious life; they are one and the same thing; . . . this voice of your own mind is the voice of God; . . . the reason why you are bound to reverence it, is because it is the direct revelation of your Maker's Will, not written in books many ages since nor attested by distant miracles, but in the flesh and blood, in the faculties and emotions of your constitution.³

Were it not an unspeakable blessing to the world the appearance of such a man in its affairs, who should show us how much radiance may belong to mere character, who should show us that honour may dwell in a small tenement as well as in a state house, and that there is no place that will not shine wider the light of virtues. We do not know how rich we are.⁴

In concluding Emerson was specific in pointing to the dominating idea of the sermon.

What is the practical end of the views we have taken?
This, and this only,--Be genuine.--Be girt with truth.
Aim in all things at all times to be that within which

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1. Ibid., 184-5.
 2. Ibid., 187.
 3. Ibid., 188-9.
 4. Ibid., 189-90.

you would be without. Commune with your own heart that you may learn what it means to be true to yourself and follow that guidance steadily.¹

His break with the Church was complete.²

All of this comparing of the ideas of Carlyle and Emerson (and so far in this chapter I have done little more than that) only hints at the existence of any influence by Carlyle on Emerson. That, for example, Carlyle commanded his readers again and again to be genuine has no necessary connection with Emerson's subsequent taking up of the same plea. Considering only what has been said so far, one might assert that Emerson came to his conclusions independently of Carlyle. But he did not, and this fact will become apparent as I continue to examine Emerson's relationship to the writings of Carlyle.

Emerson's first mention of the anonymous author whose essays had so impressed him was, as I stated earlier,³ on October 1, 1832, five years after he had read Carlyle's first review on Richter. But even at that time he did not know Carlyle's name, at least not as the author of the essays.⁴ Later in the month, on October 19th, he wrote the name Carlyle in his journal for the first time:

If Carlyle knew what an interest I have in his

1. Ibid., 190.

2. Carlyle, it must be emphasized, was but one of a number of forces helping Emerson in his break from the Church. For a discussion of two other prominent forces, see Appendix A.

3. See above page 68.

4. There is a possibility that Emerson knew Carlyle as the translator of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, which he had read in August, 1832, possibly earlier. See Cameron, K.W., Emerson's Reading, 19; and RWE: Journals, II, 349-51.

persistent goodness, would it not be worth one effort more, one prayer, one meditation? But will he resist the Deluge of bad example in England? One manifestation of goodness in a noble soul brings him in debt to all the beholders that he shall not betray their love and trust which he has awakened.¹

Between the first and nineteenth of October, then, Carlyle's name came to Emerson in connection with certain essays which he had already seen and perhaps others which he had not. Presumably, Emerson learned of Carlyle through an English Unitarian clergyman, William Steile Brown, who had come to settle in America. Brown had dinner with the Emerson family on October 21st; and according to Charles Emerson, "He told about Coleridge (who is an opium eater) and about Carlisle the author of the Characteristics article--a German bred scholar--."² Whether or not Emerson had talked to Brown by the nineteenth, however, is uncertain. In any case, by the middle of October, he had connected the name Carlyle with a number of articles which he had already noticed in recent literary reviews.

Emerson responded immediately; he searched out and read all of the writings credited to Carlyle which he had missed. And he did this so enthusiastically that he obviously held the Carlyle essays he had read in some special esteem. "Waldo," Charles Emerson commented to Aunt Mary late in October, "has been late very much a reader of translations from the German--Schiller and Goethe--and the articles on German literature written

1. RWE: Journals, II, 524.

2. MS letter to Mary Moody Emerson, October 24, 1832. Cited in Rusk, R.L., The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 165. The way in which Charles mentioned "Characteristics" leaves the impression that the articles had been noticed and talked of before, at least by Aunt Mary and Charles, and probably by the other members of the family.

by Carlyle in the English magazines."¹ On October 19th he read "Carlyle's notice of Schiller"² in Fraser's Magazine (March, 1831). This led him to Carlyle's anonymous biography of Schiller (published in 1825), which Emerson was reading by the end of the month. On the 28th he wrote that he proposed to read Schiller, but added that "the fruit, the bright pure gold of all was--Schiller himself,"³ and not any or all of his writings. After copying from the biography a quotation out of Milton ("He who would write heroic poems should make his whole life an heroic poem"⁴), Emerson quoted at length from Carlyle.⁵

Fundamentally Carlyle's emphasis upon Life, as manifested in his interpretation of Schiller, formed his deep immediate influence upon Emerson during the trying years of 1831 and 1832. The other ideas I have isolated for study meet in this single emphasis; they point to it, as do to a lesser degree all of Carlyle's early essays. In Goethe it was "Think of Living"⁶; in Carlyle it became, "the greatest work of every man, or rather the summary and net amount of all his works [is] the Life he has led."⁷

1. Ibid.

2. RWE: Journals, II, 524.

3. Ibid., 526.

4. Ibid., 525. From TC: Works, XXV, 44. Carlyle used this quotation again in his essay on Burns (TC: Works, XXVI, 316). Later Emerson used it in his lecture on Milton delivered on February 20, 1835. (RWE: Works, XII, 256). The original appears in Milton's Apology for Smeectymnus, "He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem."

5. See RWE: Journals, II, 526-7. For the original in Carlyle see TC: Works, XXV, 23.

6. Wilhelm Meister (Carlyle's translation), II, 120. (TC: Works, XXIV). Also quoted by Carlyle in "Goethe's Portrait" (Fraser's Magazine, March, 1832) in TC: Works, XXVII, 375. Emerson quoted it twice in September, 1832, found in RWE: Journals, II, 511, and in Young Emerson Speaks, 245.

7. TC: Works, XXVII, 402.

And in Emerson this same emphasis upon man and what he does is one of the keys to understanding his break from the Church and from his past. The fruit, the bright pure gold of all, if there was to be any, he realized, had to be himself, and not his pulpit oratory or his family tradition or anything outside of him. The gradual realization of this is, in large part, the story of 1832. Carlyle's concept was inherent in his appeal to Be Genuine and to Act; it was related to his separation of Man and the Circumstances and, deeper still, upon the distinction between Reason and Understanding. It did not, of course, appear only in the Life of Schiller, but the reading of that book drew from Emerson the comment about "Schiller himself", and that single comment is the evident sign of Carlyle's early influence.

The reading of the Life of Schiller confirmed Emerson in his resignation from the ministry and strengthened his belief that this act would be, not his ruin (as Aunt Mary and others had predicted), but if anything his making. Schiller had been trained, as had Emerson, for the church, but in obeying his inner voice, he had revolted against it. According to Carlyle:

Truth with Schiller, or what seemed such, was an indispensable requisite: if he but suspected an opinion to be false, however dear it may have been, he seems to have examined it with rigid scrutiny, and if he found it guilty, to have plucked it out, and resolutely cast in forth. The sacrifice might cause him pain, permanent pain; real damage, he imagined, it could hardly cause him. It is irksome and dangerous to travel in the dark; but better so than with an Ignis-fatuus to guide us.¹

1. TC: Works, XXV, 198.

Late in the biography Carlyle quoted from Schiller a passage of which he wrote to Jane Welsh, "It is my very creed, expressed with Schiller's eloquence."¹ A long extract is necessary.

'The Artist, it is True', says Schiller, 'is the son of his age; but pity for him if he is its pupil, or even its favourite! Let some beneficent Divinity snatch him when a suckling from the breast of his mother, and nurse him with the milk of a better time; that he may ripen to his full stature beneath a distant Grecian sky. And having grown to manhood, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century; not, however, to delight it by his presence; but terrible, like the Son of Agamemnon, to purify it. . . .

'But how is the Artist to guard himself from the corruptions of his time, which on every side assail him? By despising its decisions. Let him look upwards to his dignity and his mission, not downwards to his happiness and his wants. Free alike from the vain activity, that longs to impress its traces on the fleeting; and from the discontented spirit of enthusiasm, that measures by the scale of perfection the meagre product of reality, let him leave to common sense, which is here at home, the province of the actual; while he strives from the union of the possible with the necessary to bring out the ideal.'²

Unknowingly Carlyle had struck to the core of Emerson's problem, clarifying it for him, strengthening him to wrestle with it, and giving him hope where others had offered only despair.³

On the 27th of October, an old copy of Fraser's Magazine open before

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1. TC: Love Letters of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh, London, 1908, II, 93. January 31, 1825.
 2. TC: Works, XXV, 201-2. From Schiller's Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen.
 3. The Life of Schiller also asserted Carlyle's plea to Be Genuine (the "salubrious air of rustic, unpretending honesty . . . forms the great beauty of Tell's character: all is native, all is genuine." page 176) and to Act ("Nine-tenths of the miseries and vices of mankind proceed from idleness." page 45).

him, Emerson copied into his journal this pertinent reminder: "'Luther's words were half battles.' At Worms to the Diet he said 'Till such time as either by proofs from Holy Scripture or by fair reason and argument I have been confuted and convicted I cannot and will not recant. It is neither safe nor prudent to do aught against conscience. Here stand I, I cannot otherwise. God assist me Amen!'"¹ The unsigned essay from which this was copied had been written by Carlyle, as undoubtedly Emerson already knew.

On November 13th, from another of Carlyle's unsigned essays, he copied two lines of Goethe.

"'What shall I teach you the foremost thing?'
Could'st teach me off my own shadow to spring?"
Goethe, Apud Carlyle²

Below this Emerson added:

Unconsciously we are furnishing comic examples, to all spectators, of cobwebbed ethical rules. I go to the Athenaeum and read that "man is not a clothes-horse", and come out and meet in Park St. my young friend who, I understand, cuts his own clothes, and who little imagines that he points a paragraph for

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1. RWE: MS journal "Q", October 27, 1832. Cited in Rusk, R.L., The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 164-5, 151. Quoted from Carlyle's "Luther's Psalm" (Fraser's Magazine, January, 1831) TC: Works XXVII, 161-2.
 2. RWE: Journals, II, 530. November 13, 1832. Quoted from Carlyle's "Goethe's Works" (Foreign Quarterly Review, August, 1832). TC: Works, XXVII, 432.

Thomas Carlyle.¹

During the month from October 15th to November 15th Emerson read the writings of Carlyle which earlier he had missed and perhaps reread some of those he had already seen. Suddenly Carlyle and what Carlyle had to say became openly important to the young ex-minister.

On November 19th Emerson wrote to his brother William of his resignation and his growing plans. The letter deserves close study.

. . . the severing of our strained cord that bound me to the church is a mutual relief. It is sorrowful to me & to them in a measure for we were both suited & hoped to be mutually useful. But though it will occasion me some, (possibly, much) temporary embarrassment yet I walk firmly toward a peace & a freedom which I plainly

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1. RWE: Journals, II, 530. The reference to Carlyle's clothes-philosophy caused the editors of the journals to add "(SARTOR RESARTUS)" above the passage. Obviously, however, Sartor was not the source for Emerson's comments, for it had not yet been published in any form. Emerson must have found the idea, then, in one of Carlyle's essays, and indeed he did. In his essay "Goethe's Works", Carlyle quoted the mythical hero of Sartor Resartus, Professor Teufelsdröckh: "Man is never, let me assure thee, altogether a clothes-horse: under the clothes there is always a body and a soul." (TC: Works, XXVII, 392) The quotation from Goethe copied from the same essay on the same day (see preceding note) makes the source certain. That Sartor Resartus was not in Emerson's hands in 1832 (the Journals also list it in the book list for that year, II, 542) is further confirmed by a letter of April 22, 1954, to me from Mr. W. H. Bond, Curator of MSS at the Houghton Library of Harvard University where the Emerson MSS are. He wrote: "Sartor Resartus is, so far as I can determine, nowhere named in the three notebooks containing the journal entries for 1832. It is the editors who have interjected the name, and evidently only the basis of the passage you note on p. 530. . . . There is nothing in the handwriting to distinguish it from other entries around it. In other words I do not believe it to be a later interpolation by Emerson or by anyone else." See Appendix B for full letter.

see before me albeit far. Shall I pester you with half the projects that sprout & bloom in my head, of action, of literature, philosophy? Am I not to have a magazine--my own dainty--scorning co-operation & taking success by storm. The vice of these undertakings in general is that they depend on many contributors who all speak an average sense & no one of them utters his own individuality. Yet that the soul of man should speak out, & not the soul general to the town or town pump is essential to all eloquence, to originality. The objection to a paper conducted by one man is the limits of human strength. The Goethe or Schiller that would do it must have a constitution that does not belong to every lean lily-livered aspirant of these undigesting days. But give me time, give me strength & cooperation, on my own terms. . . . Will we not sweep the tables of atheneums & the escriptories of the learned & the fair clean of all the American periodical paper, green, yellow, olive, & gray?

What assistance too can I not command. Give me my household gods against the world. William & Edward & Charles. Why the plot is the best plot that was ever laid. Wait & see what a few months shall do--to hatch this fair egg.¹

In a letter which reveals Emerson as rapidly reorientating himself in the direction of a literary career, the mention of Goethe and Schiller is significant. Both had come to Emerson largely through Carlyle.² And with

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1. RWE: Letters, I, 357-8. Family letters of the same time show that Emerson was not as spirited as this letter implies. Physically he was weaker than he had been since his forced trip to the South in 1826-7, and mentally, according to Charles, he was "very much dispirited," presumably by the events of the past year and a half. (See RWE: Letters, I, 357 and Cabot, J. E., Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson, I, 173 ff.). And yet the exuberant hopefulness of this letter could hardly have been an act.
 2. Aside from the numerous Carlyle reviews and translations of Goethe and Schiller, Emerson had seen Coleridge's translation of Schiller's Wallenstein (see RWE: Journals, II, 377) and an edition of The Memoirs of Goethe (see Cameron, K. W., Emerson's Reading, 19, and RWE: Journals, II, 348).

both, Carlyle had pointedly emphasized their lives as men of letters.

Carlyle began early his praise of the literary career. In his second contribution to the Edinburgh Review, "The State of German Literature" (October, 1827),¹ he wrote:

Literary Men are the appointed interpreters of this Divine Idea; a perpetual priesthood, we might say, standing forth, generation after generation, as the dispensers and living types of God's everlasting wisdom, to show it in their writings and actions, in such particular form as their own particular times require it in.²

At the beginning of his essay on Voltaire (The Foreign Review, April, 1829),³ Carlyle asserted that "Could ambition always choose its own path, and were will in human understanding synonymous with faculty, all truly ambitious men would be men of letters."⁴

In "Signs of the Times" (Edinburgh Review, June, 1829),⁵ he told his readers that at the present time literature was more important than it ever had been; gradually it was taking over the functions of the church. "The true Church of England, at this moment, lies in the Editors of its Newspapers. These preach to the people daily, weekly."⁶ In his "Historic Survey of German Poetry" (Edinburgh Review, March, 1831), Carlyle repeated his view of the importance of literature:

Literature is fast becoming all in all to us; our Church, our Senate, our whole Social Constitution. The True Pope of Christendom is not the feeble old man in Rome; nor is its Autocrat the Napoleon, the Nicholas . . .

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1. For Emerson's reading of "The State of German Literature", see above page 31.
 2. TC: Works, XXVI, 58.
 3. For Emerson's reading of "Voltaire", see above page 33.
 4. TC: Works, XXVI, 396.
 5. For Emerson's reading of "Signs of the Times", see above page 33.
 6. TC: Works, XXVII, 77.

[but] is that man, the real or seeming Wisest of the past age; crowned after death; who finds his Hierarchy of gifted Authors, his Clergy of assiduous Journalists; whose Decretals, written not on parchment, but on the living souls of men. . . . In these times of ours, all Intellect has fused itself into Literature: Literature, Printed Thought, is the molten sea and wonder bearing chaos, into which mind after mind casts forth its opinion, its feeling, to be molten into the general mass, and to work there.¹

Then in "Characteristics" (Edinburgh Review, December, 1831);²

Literature is but a branch of Religion, and always participates in its character: however, in our time, it is the only branch that still shows any greenness; and, as some think, must one day become the main stem.³

More important to Emerson than all of these brief paragraphs on literature was the searching analysis of the life of letters in Carlyle's Life of Schiller (1825), which Emerson read in October, 1832. Emerson had finally severed his bond with the church and was in search of a new vocation. Literature was a natural field for him to explore; the cryptic combination of heredity and environment had ensured that. And yet his move from the church into literature was not quite so simple. His struggle with his conscience throughout 1832 had left him with a deep sense of his own inadequacies. Some thought him mentally unbalanced, and others frankly told him that he had ruined his life. For all he knew they might be right. Certainly he was not going to go blindly into a new profession from which later he might have to withdraw.

In this frame of mind he took up Carlyle's Life of Schiller.

1. Ibid., 369-70.

2. For Emerson's reading of "Characteristics", see above page 63.

3. TC: Works, XXVIII, 23.

Beginning part II of the biography, he read, "If to know wisdom were to practise it; if fame brought true dignity and peace of mind; or happiness consisted in nourishing the intellect with its appropriate food, and surrounding the imagination with ideal beauty, a literary life would be the most enviable which the lot of this world affords." But the literary life, the biography continued, "is perhaps, among the many modes by which an ardent mind endeavours to express its activity, the most thickly beset with suffering and degradation." And yet, "If an author's life is more agitated and more painful than that of others, it may also be made more spirit-stirring and exalted." The men of letters "keep awake the finer parts of our souls, . . . give us better aims than power or pleasure, and withstand the total sovereignty of Mammon in this earth. They are the vanguard in the march of mind; the intellectual Backwoodsmen, reclaiming from the idle wilderness new territories for the thought and the activity of their happier brethren."¹

One might suspect that this picture of the literary life was attractive to Emerson; the reference to Schiller in the letter of November 19th to William (quoted above page 80) makes it certain. It is largely upon this reference that I base my conclusion that Carlyle was an instrument in guiding Emerson into a literary career. More than Carlyle's picture of the man of letters by itself, the Timeliness made the influence. At any time other than October and November of 1832 the same emphasis would have brought little more than a nod of intellectual agreement from Emerson; but at this time of transition it put into his mind dreams which were to grow into actions.

1. TC: Works, XXV, 41-43.

CHAPTER V

EMERSON'S FIRST TRIP TO EUROPE

On December 10, 1832, in a letter to his brother William, Emerson wrote:

My malady has proved so obstinate & comes back as often as it goes away, that I am now bent on taking Dr. Ware's advice & seeing if I cannot prevent these ruinous relapses by a sea voyage. I proposed to take a modest trip to the West Indies & spend the winter with Edward but in a few hours the dream changed into a purpureal vision of Naples & Italy & that is the rage of yesterday & today in Chardon St. Emerson's mother's home.¹

But he did not tell why this trip to Europe. Surely a restful visit to the West Indies would have been more healthful than a winter's Atlantic crossing followed by months of sight-seeing and visiting. More, however, than physical health was involved. ". . . my narrow and desultory reading," he wrote in English Traits (1856), "had inspired the wish to see the faces of three or four writers,--Coleridge, Wordsworth, Landor, De Quincey, and the latest and strongest contributor to the critical journals, Carlyle; and I suppose if I had sifted the reasons that led me to Europe, when I was ill and advised to travel, it was mainly the attraction of these persons."² And why not? For had not these men been largely responsible for the kind of thinking that made him leave the ministry and had they not by example fostered his dream of a literary career? I must, of course, be somewhat sceptical of a statement made so long (1856) after the fact (1832). And yet the journals and letters of 1832-1833 support this retrospective

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1. RWE: Letters, I, 359.
 2. RWE: Works, V, 4.

explanation; indeed he was attracted by these men, and of them, as I shall point out, Carlyle primarily.

On Christmas Day, 1832, a small brig, the Jasper, sailed out of Boston harbour, carrying a cargo of wood, tobacco, and foodstuffs, and five passengers, one of whom was the little known Emerson. "Travelling," he was to write later, "is a fool's paradise,"¹ but in late 1832, the prospect of seeing Naples, Rome, Paris, and London excited him. The sea voyage from Boston to Malta (December 25, 1832 - February 2, 1833) proved a successful medicine to the ailing ex-minister; his health improved and with it his spirit. But the often-boring trip had more than that to offer him. The practical experience of being so many days virtually alone and helpless made him reconsider his own limitations. "I am ashamed of myself for a dull scholar," he wrote in his journal. "Every day I display a more astounding ignorance. The whole world is a millstone to me. . . . Seldom, I suppose, was a more inapt learner of arithmetic, astronomy, geography, political economy, than I am, as I daily find to my cost. It were to brag much if I should there end the catalogue of my defects. My memory of history . . . is as bad; my comprehension of a question in technical metaphysics very slow, and in all arts practick, in driving a bargain, or hiding emotion, or carrying myself in company as a man for an hour, I have no skill. What under the sun canst thou do then, pale face? Truly not much, but I can hope."² On board ship, he found, the "man of action" with

1. Ibid., II, 81. From essay "Self-Reliance."

2. RWE: Journals, III, 13 (January 7, 1833) and 17-8 (January 15, 1833).

"the brain in the hand" is "worth a thousand philosophers."¹

After a short stay in Malta, Emerson sailed to Sicily and then to Naples where he began his overland journey to the English Channel. The pace was slow, allowing him almost two weeks in Naples and a month in Rome. From Naples he wrote to his friend George Adams Sampson that traveling confirmed and echoed back to him "his most retired & unuttered thought." But, he continued, "My greatest want is one that I apprehended when at home, that I never meet with men that are great or interesting."² He had not yet visited the men whom he had set out to see.

In Rome Emerson met the Saint-Simonian Gustave d'Eichthal who "was well acquainted with Carlyle, & offered to give me [Emerson] a letter of introduction to him."³ Actually d'Eichthal gave him a letter to John Stuart Mill, who later wrote to Carlyle to introduce Emerson.⁴

What Emerson was seeking most in his travels becomes apparent in a letter from Rome to Aunt Mary:

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1. Ibid., 25 (January 25, 1833).
 2. RWE: Letters, I, 371. March 23, 1833. The letter also referred to his break with the church. "Time," he wrote, "which brings roses, will bring us topics, I trust, less sombre than the old ones." (370) The "Time brings roses" idea had come from Carlyle's essay "German Literature of the XIV and XV Centuries" (Foreign Quarterly Review, October, 1831). TC: Works, XXVII, 332. In Malta, on February 3, Emerson had written in his journal, "'Time', said friend Carlyle, 'brings roses'; a capital mot, putting a little rouge on the old skeleton's cheek." RWE: Journals, III, 28.
 3. Typescript journals, 1848, memo of 1833. Cited in RWE: Letters, I, 374. On April 16, 1833, Emerson wrote to Charles, "I have found here too a friend of Carlyle in Edinburgh, who has given me a letter of introduction to him."
 4. See below page 88.

I never get used to men. They always awaken expectations in me which they always disappoint. . . . The wise men--the true friend--the finished character--we seek everywhere & only find in fragments. Yet I cannot persuade myself that all the beautiful souls are fled out of the planet or that always I shall be excluded from good company & yoked with gree dull pitiful persons. After being cabined up by sea & land since I left home with various little people, all better to be sure & much wiser than me but such as did not help me--I cannot tell you how refreshing it was to fall in with two or three sensible persons with whom I could eat my bread & take my walks & feel myself a freeman one more of God's Universe. Yet were these last not instructors & I want instructors. God's greatest gift is a Teacher & when will he send me one, full of truth & of boundless benevolence & heroic sentiments. I can describe the man, & already have in prose & verse. I know the idea well, but there is its real blood warm counterpart?¹

In Florence Emerson sought out Walter Savage Landor in the hope of finding his wise man, but again, as he perhaps expected, he found only a fragment. Emerson heard Landor praise Washington and Montaigne but not "my Carlyle,"² and he came away feeling that "Sincerity, in the highest sense, is very rare. Men of talents want simplicity & sincerity as much as others."³ "It is a mean thing," he wrote Charles of his visit to Landor, "that healthy men, philosophers, cannot work themselves clear of this ambition to appear men of the world. As if every dandy didn't understand his business better than they. I hope better things of Carlyle who has lashed the same folly."⁴ Gradually a visit to Carlyle was becoming

1. RWE: Letters, I, 375-6. April 18, 1833.

2. MS journal, 1833. Cited in Scudder, J., The Lonely Wayfaring Man, London, 1936, 10.

3. RWE: Letters, I, 378. May 20, 1833.

4. Ibid., 383. May 17, 1833. Presumably Emerson had in mind Carlyle's appeal to Be Genuine.

Emerson's primary objective.

By the end of June he was in Paris, writing that "my European experience has only confirmed & clinched the old laws wherewith I was wont to begin & end my parables."¹ To his journal he confided:

Thus, shall I write memoirs? A man who was no courtier, but loved men, went to Rome, --and there lived with boys. He came to France and in Paris lives alone, and in Paris seldom speaks. If he do not see Carlyle in Edinburgh, he may go to America without saying anything in earnest, except to Cranch and to Lander.²

On July 20, after a twenty hour boat trip from Boulogne, he landed at the Tower Stairs in London, pleased "to hear English spoken in the streets"³ again. Within a few days he searched out Mill to give him d'Eichthal's letter. Mill accordingly wrote a letter of introduction for Emerson to take to Carlyle, but, what Emerson could not know, he sent another directly to Carlyle, putting the responsibility for the introductory note on d'Eichthal. ". . . from the one or two conversations I have had with him," Mill wrote of Emerson, "I do not think him a very hopeful subject."⁴ Little else could have come out of a meeting between the young Utilitarian and one who had already described Utilitarianism as a "stinking philosophy."⁵

Early in August Emerson went to Highgate in quest of a meeting with Coleridge. If his discovery of Lander's limitations had been disappointing,

1. Ibid., 386. To Charles Emerson, June 25, 1833.

2. RWE: Journals, III, 159. July 11, 1833. John Cranch was a young American art student he had met in Rome.

3. Ibid., 171-2.

4. The Letters of John Stuart Mill (edited by H. S. R. Elliot, London, 1910), I, 60. Letter to Carlyle, August 2, 1833.

5. RWE: Journals, II, 455. January 21, 1832.

his close look at Coleridge was even more so. "I was in his company for about an hour," Emerson wrote, "but find it impossible to recall the largest part of his discourse, which was often like so many printed paragraphs in his book, --perhaps the same, --so readily did he fall into certain commonplaces. As I might have foreseen, the visit was rather a spectacle than a conversation, of no use beyond the satisfaction of my curiosity. He was old and preoccupied, and could not bend to a new companion and think with him."¹

From London Emerson travelled slowly northward, yet to visit Wordsworth and Carlyle (De Quincey, mentioned in English Traits, he did not meet until 1848). On the 16th of August he arrived in Edinburgh, intent upon seeing Carlyle. The latter, however, was not in Edinburgh, and only after "almost insuperable difficulty,"² according to Alexander Ireland who was with Emerson at the time, did he learn that Carlyle was living on an isolated farm in Dumfriesshire. Ireland's recollection of Emerson's conversation in Edinburgh is revealing. He wrote:

Of De Quincey, Wordsworth, and Carlyle he spoke many

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1. RWE: Works, V, 14. This passage was taken from his journals of 1833. See Scudden, T., op. cit., 15. In The Life of John Sterling (1851), Carlyle wrote of Coleridge: "Nothing could be more copious than his talk; and furthermore it was always, virtually or literally, of the nature of a monologue; suffering no interruption, however reverent; hastily putting aside all foreign additions, annotations, or most ingenuous desires for elucidation, as well meant superfluities that would never do. . . ."
"To sit as a passive bucket and be pumped into, whether you consent or not, can in the long-run be exhilarating to no creature." TC: Works, XI, 55.
 2. Ireland, Alexander, Ralph Waldo Emerson (London, 1882), 147.

times--especially Carlyle, of whom he expressed the warmest admiration. Some of his articles in the 'Edinburgh Review' and 'Foreign Quarterly Review' had much struck him--one particularly, entitled 'Characteristics' --and the concluding passages of another on German Literature, regarding which he was desirous of speaking to the author. He wished much to meet both Carlyle and Wordsworth: 'Am I, who have hung over their works in my chamber at home, not to see these men in the flesh, and thank them, and interchange some thoughts with them, when I am passing their very doors?' He spoke of Carlyle's 'rich thoughts, and rare noble glimpses of great truths, his struggles to reveal his deepest inspirations, --not all at once apparent, but to be digged out, as it were, reverently and patiently from his writings.'¹

From Edinburgh Emerson journeyed north through the Trossachs and then down Loch Lomond to Glasgow. By the 24th of August he was in Dumfries. The next day, having learned that Craigenputtock, the farm where Carlyle was living, was sixteen miles distant, he hired a gig and driver to take him there. And as he was driven from the city into the parish of Dunscore and finally to Carigenputtock, he must have been struck by the wildness of the countryside. Here so close to nature, he thought, was a fitting home for the man he pictured Carlyle to be. About two in the afternoon the ex-minister knocked on the door of the two-story stone farm house, finally to meet face to face the man whose anonymous writing had attracted him three thousand miles to get a closer look.

My study of the first part of Carlyle's influence upon Emerson ends here, not arbitrarily, but because for both the year 1833 was a transitional year. For Emerson it was the lull between his casting-off the chains of

1. Ibid., 146-7.

his environment and the setting-forth on a new career. For Carlyle 1833 marked the end of his literary apprenticeship; he was looking away from Germany toward France, away from Scotland toward London. With these changes the nature of the influence changed.

PART THREE

EMERSON'S FIRST VISIT WITH CARLYLE

"A white day in my years."

--Emerson

PART THREE

EMERSON'S FIRST VISIT WITH CARLYLE

"A white day in my years."¹

--Emerson

The circumstances which surround the first meeting of Carlyle and Emerson could hardly have been more conducive to a friendship. Carlyle, who had so vehemently advocated a life of action and work, was living his own precepts.² This, indeed, was attractive to Emerson, for he had had enough of insincerity. But even more attractive to the young traveler was Carlyle's open friendliness. Surely Carlyle was not by nature a compatible being; yet on this single day with Emerson he was sincerely and obviously friendly.

The reasons behind this friendliness are clear. The Carlyles were lonely. Farm life, so attractive to them from a distance, did not agree with them. And so any break in the monotony which encompassed their lives, they welcomed enthusiastically. There was more, however, to Carlyle's friendliness than this. As a writer he was still virtually unknown--a few anonymous essays, a strange book which no one would publish, a few followers in Edinburgh. And then from across the ocean and across the continent of Europe and finally, and perhaps most significantly, across the desolate sixteen miles from Dumfries came a young man attracted by what he had read. Jane Carlyle thought that it was "the first journey since Noah's Deluge

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1. Cited in Rusk, R. L. The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 195.
 2. Carlyle, it must be added, was not happy with his life at Craigenputtock; he was already planning to leave the desolation of Dumfriesshire for London.

undertaken to Craigenputtock for such a purpose."¹ In such a situation anything but friendship would be out of place.

Emerson had come to Europe to meet face to face the men whose writings had played so great a part in his most recent thinking. Except for his day at Craigenputtock, however, he had been disappointed. Landor lacked "simplicity and sincerity."² Coleridge had been unable to "bend to a new companion and think with him."³ And Wordsworth "made the impression of a narrow and very English mind."⁴

But if these men had disappointed him, Carlyle certainly did not. Whereas Landor, Coleridge, and Wordsworth had seemed old and mentally stagnant, Carlyle appeared young and flexible. "The comfort of meeting a man of genius," Emerson wrote of Carlyle a few days after the visit, "is that he speaks sincerely, that he feels himself to be so rich that he is above the meanness of pretending to knowledge which he has not."⁵ Here was a man who was living up to all he had written (or so it seemed to Emerson).

And yet Carlyle, like the others, had his weaknesses, and Emerson was not so blinded by his affection as not to see any. "My own feeling," he wrote of Carlyle, "was that I had met with men of far less power who had yet greater insight into religious truth."⁶ Thus Carlyle, too, fell

1. TC: Letter to his mother, August 27, 1833. Cited in Froude, J.A., Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years of his Life (New York, 1882) II, 291.

2. RWE: Letters, I, 378. Quoted above page 87.

3. RWE: Works, V, 14. Quoted above page 89.

4. Ibid., 24.

5. RWE: Letters, I, 394. Letter to Alexander Ireland. August 30, 1833.

6. Ibid.

short of Emerson's ideal. Emerson finally realized what he had long suspected, that he could never find the "blood warm counterpart"¹ of his ideal. If Carlyle could not be this ideal, he felt, no one could. On September 16, at sea, he wrote, "The truth is, you can't find any example that will suit you, nor could, if the whole family of Adam should pass in procession before you, for you are a new work of God."² But he had found something that was to be vitally important in his life--a deep friendship.

In examining closely this initial meeting between Carlyle and Emerson, I was struck by the use of the adjective amiable, not so much that it was used often but that men who were noted for their coldness in personal relationships should use it so freely in talking of each other. Within a single day of the visit, in a letter to his brother, Carlyle referred to Emerson as "the most amiable creature in the world."³ Two weeks later he wrote to J. S. Mill of Emerson, "A most gentle, recommendable, amiable, whole-hearted man."⁴ Meanwhile Emerson was equally affectionate in his mention of Carlyle. In Liverpool, waiting for his ship to depart for America, he reminisced of his talks with Landor, Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth. Finally he added, "But Carlyle--Carlyle is so amiable that I love him."⁵ The next day, impatient with having to wait, Emerson wrote:

Ah me! Mr. Thomas Carlyle, I would give a gold pound

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1. Ibid., 376. Letter to Mary Moody Emerson, April 18, 1833. Quoted above page 87.
 2. RWE: Journals, III, 205.
 3. TC: Letters of Thomas Carlyle: 1826-1836, (edited by C. E. Norton, London, 1883) II, 113. Letter to Dr. John Carlyle, August 27, 1833.
 4. TC: Letters of Thomas Carlyle to John Stuart Mill, John Sterling and Robert Browning, (edited by A. Carlyle, London, 1923), page 66. September 10, 1833.
 5. RWE: Journals, III, 186. September 1, 1833.

for your wise company this gloomy eve. Ah, we would speed the hour. Ah, I would rise above myself--what self-complacent glances casts the soul about in the moment of fine conversation, esteeming itself the author of all the fine things it utters, and the master of the riches the memory produces, and how scornfully looks it back upon the plain person it was yesterday without a thought.¹

Indeed, the visit to Craigenputtock had been "A white day in my years."²

1. Ibid., 190. September 2, 1833.

2. Cited in Rusk, R. L. The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 195.

PART FOUR

CARLYLE'S INFLUENCE UPON EMERSON

1833 - 1847

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Had Emerson met with some fatal accident in 1833, the world would never have suspected, much less known, its loss (or, as some would have it, gain). If, however, fate had delayed this hypothetical accident fourteen years until 1847, the reputation of Emerson as a man of letters and as a philosopher would be little changed from what it is today though he lived another thirty-five years after that date. These years between his first and second trips to England--1833 and 1847--were for Emerson the productive years. His ideas, most of which had been planted earlier, came together and matured into the philosophy peculiar to Emerson. And with the exposition of this philosophy through lectures and essays, his fame developed and spread throughout the world.

In this part of my thesis I shall attempt to determine the nature and extent of Carlyle's influence upon Emerson during these years.

Before going into the details of the influence, however, I must point out two important changes which tended to make what influence Carlyle might have had after 1833 less effective. The first change was in Emerson. His trip to Europe had afforded him a lengthy solitude to mull over the ideas which had become so important to him. By the time of his return to New England in October, 1833, the basic elements of his philosophy had been formed. Consequently from this time forth he was less vulnerable to a strong influence. Now after years of instability, of growing and changing, he was relatively stable in this thinking, and being so, he

offered little opening for a changing force to enter. Before he had been on the way to becoming Ralph Waldo Emerson; now he was Ralph Waldo Emerson. And with this change the atmosphere in which an influence thrives, an atmosphere which had been prevalent before 1833, disappeared.

The second change, no less important, is this: after 1833 Emerson knew Carlyle. Before, the words of Carlyle were anonymous; now the source was known. And this change rendered the power of Carlyle's ideas considerably weaker. An anonymous message carries with it an inherent authority because in its anonymity it seems to escape human frailty. Familiarity, on the other hand, so often reduces the mysterious and the awesome to the commonplace.¹ And so Carlyle, who had been so much an influence as a disembodied voice, became Carlyle the friend; his words, though they were very much the same as they had been, never again carried quite the authority in Emerson's mind. That this is true will become more apparent later in this part of my thesis.

1. Look, for example, at what the Biblical criticism of the last century has done to the authority of the Bible. Unknown the authors were infallible saints; known they became fallible men.

CHAPTER II

CARLYLE'S PUBLISHED WORKS AND EMERSON

1833 to 1847

Carlyle's French Revolution drew from Emerson a comment fundamental to an understanding of the later influence (by later, I mean after 1833).

On February 19, 1838, Emerson wrote in his journal:

Carlyle, too: ah, my friend! I thought, as I looked at your book today, which all the brilliant so admire, that you have spoiled it for me. Why, I say, should I read this book? The man himself is mine: he can sit under trees of Paradise and tell me a hundred histories deeper, truer, dearer than this, all the eternal days of God. I shall not tire, I shall not shame him: we shall be children in heart and men in counsel and act. The pages which to others look so rich and alluring, to me have a frigid and marrowless air, for the warm hand and heart I have an estate in, and the living eye of which I can almost discern across the sea some sparkles. I think my affection to that man really incapacitates me from reading his book. In the windy night, in the sordid day, out of banks and bargains and disagreeable business, I espy you; and run to my pleasant thoughts.¹

This was not an isolated feeling that Emerson had but once. He seems to have had a similar feeling about each of Carlyle's books; he was always somehow disappointed. The reason for this disappointment is clear in the above passage. Emerson had carried away from Craigenputtock an exalted mental image of Carlyle. When compared to this image, Carlyle's works seemed to him pale and lifeless.

Emerson's response to Sartor Resartus is a good example of this

1. FWE: Journals, IV, 398-9.

disappointment. It is a good example for two reasons: first, that it shows clearly the disappointment; and second, that of all of Carlyle's works it has been the most closely associated with Emerson's name.

Soon after the middle of March, 1834, Emerson began reading Sartor Resartus as it appeared in installments in Fraser's Magazine. On May 14, having read about half of the book, he wrote to Carlyle the first letter of a correspondence which was to span thirty-eight years and fill more than two volumes. A long extract is necessary to show Emerson's feelings about that part of Sartor Resartus which he had read.

In Liverpool I wrote to Mr. Fraser to send me his Magazine, and I have now received four numbers of the Sartor Resartus, for whose light thanks evermore. I am glad that one living scholar is self-centred, and will be true to himself though none ever were before; who, as Montaigne says, "puts his ear close by himself, and holds his breath and listens." And none can be offended with the self-subsistency of one so catholic and jocund. And 'tis good to have a new eye inspect our mouldy social forms, our politics, and schools, and religion. I say our, for it cannot have escaped you that a lecture on these topics written for England may be read to America. Evermore thanks for the brave stand you have made for Spiritualism in these writings. But has literature any parallel to the oddity of the vehicle chosen to convey this treasure? I delight in the contents; the form, which my defective apprehension for a joke makes me not appreciate, I leave to your merry discretion. And yet did ever wise and philanthropic author use so defying a diction? As if society were not sufficiently shy of truth without providing it beforehand with an objection to the form. . . . I comprehend not why you should lavish in that spendthrift style of yours celestial truths. Bacon and Plato have something too solid to say than that they can afford to be humorists. You are dispensing that which is rarest, namely, the simplest truths, --truths which lie next to consciousness, and which only the Platos and Goethes perceive. I look for the hour with impatience when the vehicle will be worthy of the spirit, --when the word will be as simple, and so as resistless, as the thought,

--and, in short, where your words will be one with things.¹

From this it is quite clear that Emerson was excited by the ideas but repelled by the style of Sartor Resartus. He had the feeling that he had come into contact with most of the ideas before, and indeed he had-- in Carlyle's early essays and in Coleridge's books. Here again he found the appeal to action and genuineness, and the stress upon literature; here again, underlying all, was the subtle distinction between Reason and Understanding.

It would be a comparatively simple though lengthy task to compare parts of Sartor Resartus with Emerson's writings of the 1834-1847 period. But it would prove little. For though Emerson read and reread Sartor Resartus and though he occasionally borrowed from it, he was not much influenced by it.

I say this for two reasons. First, he was not deeply enthusiastic about the book--far less so than many of his contemporaries. The letter quoted above certainly shows this coolness toward the book. Though Emerson was instrumental in having Sartor Resartus published in New England, his preface to the first edition seems apologetic, as though he felt embarrassed for his part in publishing it. In 1835 he wrote to Carlyle that when compared to the lovers of Sartor Resartus in New England "I am an icicle."² Then a few months later he wrote to Carlyle again:

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1. RWE: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 13-15. May 14, 1834.
 2. RWE: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 49. March 12, 1835.

Indeed, I have heard that you may hear the Sartor preached from some of our best pulpits and lecture-rooms. Don't think I speak of myself, for I cherish carefully a salutary horror at the German style, and hold off my admiration as long as ever I can. But all my importance is quite at an end. For now that Doctors of Divinity and the solemn Review itself have broke silence to praise you, I have quite lost my plume as your harbinger.¹

The reason for this reservation in Emerson is clear; he knew the real Carlyle, whom he felt capable of better things.

The second reason why I say Sartor Resartus little influenced Emerson is perhaps more apparent but certainly no more real. Two years after reading Sartor Resartus, Emerson published his first book, Nature, which he had written during 1835 and early 1836. If Sartor Resartus had been a strong influence upon Emerson, I would expect to find some evidence of that influence in Nature. In fact, however, there is surprisingly little in Nature that recalls Sartor Resartus--a few passages maybe,² but certain nowhere

1. Ibid., 84. October 7, 1835. The "Solemn Review" is the North American Review, which published a paper on Sartor Resartus in October, 1835.

2. Those passages in Nature which bring to mind Sartor Resartus are few and for the most part insignificant. Carlyle had said: "Produce! Produce! Were it but

the pitifullest, infinitesimal fraction of a product, produce it, in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee; out with it, then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might." (TC: Works, I, 157).

Emerson wrote: "A man is fed . . . that he may work" (RWE: Works, I, 14).

And: "Whilst the abstract question occupies your intellect, nature brings it in the concrete to be solved by your hands." (RWE: Works, I, 75).

Carlyle had said: "The secret of man's being is still like the Sphinx's secret: a riddle that he cannot rede." (TC: Works, I, 42).

And: "The Universe . . . was a mighty Sphinx-riddle, which I knew so little of, yet must rede, or be devoured." (TC: Works, I, 102.)

near enough to warrant Carlyle's later assertion that Emerson had taken his system out of Sartor.¹

If these two reasons taken together do not prove (and I do not think they do) that Emerson was not substantially affected by Sartor Resartus, they certainly point in the direction of that conclusion.

With but two exceptions Carlyle's works of the 1834 to 1847 period found in Emerson relatively cool responses--ones similar to his response to Sartor Resartus. And I need not burden this paper with a detailed examination of the negligible influence of these works. The two exceptions, however, are worth noting.

In the January, 1837, number of the London and Westminster Review Emerson read Carlyle's "Mirabeau" and was immediately struck by it. "This piece," he wrote in his journal, "will establish his kingdom . . . in the mind of his countrymen. How he gropes with giant fingers into the dark of man, into the obscure recesses of power in human will, and we are encouraged by his word to feel the might that is in a man. . . . Indeed this piece is all thunder."² Two days later in a letter to Carlyle he added, "That ["Mirabeau"] is genuine thunder, which nobody that wears ears can affect to mistake for the rumbling of cart-wheels. . . . The doctrine is indeed

(2. Cont'd) Emerson wrote: "There sits the Sphinx at the roadside, and from age to age, as each prophet comes by, he tries his fortune at reading her riddle." (RWE: Works, I, 34.)

1. See Duffy, Charles Gavan, Conversations with Carlyle, London, 1892, page 93.

2. RWE: Journals, IV, 195. March 29, 1837.

true and grand which you preach as by cannonade, that God made a man, and it were as well to stand by and see what is in him, and, if he act ever from his impulses, believe that he has his own checks, and, however extravagant, will keep his orbit, and return from far."¹ Certainly "Mirabeau" must have confirmed many of Emerson's already well-established ideas and thus strengthened them. But in "Mirabeau" as earlier in Sartor Resartus there were few new ideas for Emerson. And any confirming influence the lengthy essay might have had is virtually untraceable because Emerson already believed and already expounded his own version of the basic ideas of "Mirabeau." One thing, however, is certain. The essay increased both his respect and his hope for Carlyle; an examination of his journals and correspondence during March and April of 1837 shows this clearly.

Carlyle's short book, Past and Present, is the second exception to the generality that Emerson was comparatively cool toward Carlyle's works. Emerson received the book during April, 1843, and read it immediately. On May 10, he entered in his journal:

How many things this book of Carlyle gives us to think. It is a brave grappling with the problem of the times, no luxurious holding aloof, as in the custom of men of letters, who are usually bachelors and not husbands in the state, but Literature here has thrown off his gown and descended into the open lists. The gods come among us in the likeness of men. An honest Iliad of English woes.²

A week later he wrote, "The creative vortex has not spun over London, over our modern Europe, until now in Carlyle."³

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1. RWE: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 117-8. March 31, 1837.
 2. RWE: Journals, VI, 394-5.
 3. Ibid., 400. May 19, 1843.

The July issue of the Dial, the periodical of New England transcendentalism, contained Emerson's review of Past and Present,¹ according to Professor Rusk, "perhaps the most enthusiastic comment Emerson ever published on Carlyle."²

After July Emerson seldom mentioned Past and Present directly, but that the book had at least a temporary effect upon him becomes apparent from a study of his journals and lectures. On August 25, 1843, for example, he showed a social concern for the railroad workers which was quite unusual for him.³

His lecture "The Young American", delivered in February of 1844, showed a deeper concern for politics than any of his earlier works. Here again was the social concern that formed the bulk of Past and Present. "This picture [of the growth and prosperity of New England]," he told his audience, "is a little saddened, when too early seen, by the wrongs that are done in the contracts that are made with the laborers. Our hospitality to the poor Irishman has not much merit in it. We pay the poor fellow very ill. To work from dark to dark for sixty or even fifty cents a day is but pitiful wages for a married man."⁴ This lecture was one of Emerson's few lapses, so to speak, into what he so often referred to as the "transient." So closely did it follow his enthusiastic reading of Past and Present (within a year) that it would be difficult not to see a connection between the two. How strong and how lasting the influence was is difficult to

1. Review reprinted in RWE: Works, XII, 379-391.

2. From RWE: Letters, III, 182.

3. See RWE: Journals, VI, 443-4.

4. RWE: Works, I, 453-4.

determine. His passive approach to the slavery problem indicates that the influence of Past and Present was either brief or ineffective, or possibly both.

With "Mirabeau" and Past and Present taken into consideration, the influence upon Emerson of Carlyle's formal writings of the 1834 to 1847 period was nevertheless insignificant.

I thought, as I looked at your book today, which all the brilliant so admire, that you have spoiled it for me. Why, I say, should I need this book? The man himself is mine.¹

1. RWE: Journals, IV, 398. See above page 98.

CHAPTER III
CARLYLE'S LETTERS AND EMERSON
1834 - 1847

Emerson had been with Carlyle but a single day, and they lived on opposite sides of a gigantic ocean; and yet Emerson said he was incapable of reading Carlyle's books because "the man himself is mine." When he wrote this in 1838, did he have in mind the image of Carlyle at Craigenputtock five years earlier? Yes, primarily he did, but the fond memory of that distant day was by no means all. To it had been added an increasing number of letters from Carlyle. In each of them Emerson found "the man himself." And so to determine the amount and kind of Carlyle's influence upon Emerson from 1833 to 1847, I must next examine closely their famed correspondence, which is complete almost beyond belief.

The correspondence began, as I mentioned earlier, with Emerson's letter during the spring of 1834. Carlyle's reply reached Emerson in the middle of November, and with it the friendship so firmly established at Craigenputtock was further strengthened. Carlyle thanked Emerson for his "hearty, genuine, though extravagant acknowledgement"¹ of Sartor Resartus and added that his objections to the style were "not only most intelligible to me, but welcome and instructive."² Carlyle's sincere and kindly answer to Emerson's first letter set the tone of their later correspondence.³

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1. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 20. August 12, 1834.
 2. Ibid., 22.
 3. Emerson's letter of November 20, 1834, written within a week of receiving Carlyle's first letter, shows clearly that Emerson was
(Cont'd)

Carlyle was virtually incapable, it seems, of taking pen to paper without putting forth some manner of preachment. His letters to Emerson are no exception. In his first letter he wrote, "Since I saw you I have been trying, am still trying, other methods, and shall surely get nearer the truth, as I honestly strive for it. Meanwhile, I know no method of much consequence, except that of believing, of being sincere: from Homer and the Bible down to the poorest Burns's Song. I find no other Art that promises to be perennial."¹

A number of ideas, like the one just quoted, come forth in Carlyle's letters; some are mentioned once, many of them several times. A comparison of the letters and their preachments of Emerson's contemporaneous writings offers a deep insight into the nature of Carlyle's later influence.

An interest in Goethe had been planted within Emerson during the late 1820's when the first impact of German idealism hit New England. He had read Wilhelm Meister (Carlyle's translation), and he had been excited

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3. (Cont'd) deeply pleased with Carlyle. Emerson's promising younger brother Edward had recently died, and after telling Carlyle of the loss, Emerson wrote, "As he passes out of sight, come to me visible as well as spiritual tokens of a fraternal friendliness which, by its own law, transcends the tedious barriers of custom and nation, and opens its way to the heart. This is the true consolation, and I thank my jealous for the Godsend so significantly timed. It, for the moment, realizes the hope to which I have clung with both hands, through each disappointment, that I might converse with a man whose ear of faith was not stopped, and whose argument I could not predict. May I use the word, 'I thank my God whenever I call you to remembrance'." RWE: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 27-8.
 1. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 23-4. August 12, 1834.

by the critical essays about Goethe and the translations of his works which he had found in the British periodicals. (Although he had no means of knowing it at the time, a large majority of these essays and translations were Carlyle's). Not until the 1835 to 1838 years, however, did this interest deepen and become intense.

Early in 1834, having been aroused by Goethe in translation, Emerson began to study German that he might read Goethe first hand.¹ What Goethe wrote, Emerson appreciated, but he could feel only little affinity toward the man. "I cannot read of the jubilee of Goethe, and of such a velvet life without a sense of incongruity," he wrote in January, 1834.

Genius is out of place when it reposes fifty years on chairs of state, and inhales a continual incense of adulation. Its proper ornaments and relief are poverty and reproach and danger, and if the grand-duke had cut Goethe's head off, it would have been much better for his fame than his retiring to his rooms, after dismissing the obsequious crowds, to arrange tastefully and contemplate their gifts and honorary inscriptions. . . . Are not the struggles and mortifications a more beautiful wreath than the milliners made for Goethe?²

In November he repeated in a letter to Carlyle this objection to Goethe and added, "Then the Puritan in me accepts no apology for bad morals in such as he."³ Meanwhile, however, his study of German and his reading in Goethe continued.

Answering Emerson's letter, Carlyle wrote, "Your objections to Goethe are very natural, and even bring you nearer me: nevertheless, I am by no means sure that it were not your wisdom, at this moment, to set

1. See RWE: Journals, III, 300-1.

2. RWE: Journals, III, 251-3. January 23 and 29, 1834.

3. RWE: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 30. November 30, 1834.

about learning the German Language, with a view towards studying him mainly!"¹ Little did Carlyle know that Emerson was already at work doing this.

Early in 1836 Emerson began a thorough reading of Goethe,² and as he read, his opinion of Goethe changed. In March he wrote, "But much I fear that Time, the serene judge, will not be able to make out so good a verdict for Goethe as did and doth Carlyle. I am afraid the under his faith is no-faith, that under his Love is love-of-ease. However, his muse is catholic as ever any was."³ Five months later, his opinion already substantially altered, he wrote to his brother, "Goethe is a wonderful man."⁴ And then a month later he entered in his journal:

He [Goethe] is the high priest of the age. He is the truest of all writers. His books are all records of what has been lived, and his sentences and words seem to see.⁵

About the same time he wrote to Carlyle, "I read Goethe, and now lately the posthumous volumes, with a great interest."⁶

Indeed, while it lasted, the interest was great, and a Goethean influence upon Emerson is undeniable.⁷ But the interest was short-lived.

By September, 1838, Goethe received only a "languid attention"⁸ from Emerson.

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1. TC: ibid., 39. February 3, 1835.
 2. For evidence of this reading see RWE: Journals, IV, 17. February 28, 1836.
 3. Ibid., 30. March 21, 1836.
 4. RWE: Letters, II, 33. To William Emerson, August 8, 1836. To this Emerson added, "I read little else than his books lately."
 5. RWE: Journals, IV, 94. September 23, 1836.
 6. RWE: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 100. September 17, 1836.
 7. See especially Wahr, Frederick B., Emerson and Goethe, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1915.
 8. RWE: Journals, V, 37. September 9, 1838.

And in 1840 Emerson wrote to Carlyle, "You asked me if I read German, and I forget if I have answered. I have contrived to read almost every volume of Goethe, and I have fifty-five, but I have read nothing else: but I have not now looked even into Goethe for a long time."¹

That Carlyle was almost wholly responsible for Emerson's interest and reading in Goethe is quite certain. It would be impossible to prove this statement positively, but the circumstantial evidence is overwhelming. First of all, Carlyle was the vehicle which carried the works of Goethe into New England. He was not alone in this, but he certainly was the most important. In his thesis, Emerson and Goethe, Frederick Wahr wrote that "Carlyle was the champion of Goethe among the English-speaking peoples, and to him more than to any other was due the eager interest and study of the German poet in New England during the next decade [the 1830's]."²

Secondly, Emerson often mentioned Carlyle in connection with Goethe. One example will be sufficient here. On June 26, 1834, Emerson wrote, "Goethe and Carlyle, and perhaps Novalis, have an undisguised dislike or contempt for common virtue standing on common principles."³

Finally, many of Emerson's ideas about Goethe bear a close resemblance to Carlyle's. In "Goethe's works" (Foreign Quarterly Review, August, 1832), which Emerson had read in November, 1832,⁴ and probably again in 1837,⁵ Carlyle had written, "Of great men . . . it is computed

1. RWE: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 285. April 21, 1840.

2. Wahr, F. B., Emerson and Goethe, 45.

3. RWE: Journals, IV, 313. For other examples of this see Journals, III, 299; Journals, IV, 30; Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 29.

4. See above page 79.

5. See RWE: Journals, IV, 272-4, 286. August, 1837.

that in our Time there have been two; one of the practical, another of the speculative province: Napoleon Buonaparte and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe."¹ In a lecture delivered early in 1846 Emerson, with much the same thought in mind, told his audience, "I described Bonaparte as a representative of the popular external life and aims of the nineteenth century. Its other half, its poet, is Goethe."²

This example, of course, proves little, but it is part of a body of evidence that points toward the conclusion that Carlyle was largely responsible for Emerson's interest in Goethe.

"[Carlyle] says over & over for months for years, the same thing,"³ wrote Emerson in 1848. The repetition of ideas by Carlyle, to which Emerson was referring, was apparent in the early essays. Now I find it no less so in his letters. And this repetition, as it had been in the essays, was fundamental to Carlyle's later influence upon Emerson.

In February, 1835, Carlyle wrote to Emerson:

. . . till ill health of body or of mind warns you that the moving, not to sitting, position is essential, sit still, contented in conscience; understanding well that no man, that God only knows what we are working, and will show it one day; that such and such a one, who filled the whole Earth with his hammering and trowelling, and would not let men pass for his rubbish, turns out to have built of mere coagulated froth, and vanishes with his edifice, traceless, silently, or amid hootings illimitable; while again that other still man, by the word of his mouth, by the very look of his face, was scattering

1. TC: Works, XXVII, 398.

2. RWE: Works, IV, 270.

3. RWE: Letters, IV, 39. To Lidian Emerson, March (?) 15 (?), 1848.

influences, as seeds are scattered, 'to be found flourishing as a banyan grove after a thousand years.'¹

This idea Carlyle repeated several times in his letters to Emerson, and, as I shall point out later, it became a part of Emerson's thought.

Emerson received the letter on April 20;² then on May 13 he used a similar idea in connection with his belief in genuineness. "Act naturally," he wrote,

act from within, not once or twice, but from month to month, without misgiving, without deviation, from year to year, and you shall reap the costly advantages of moral accomplishments. Make haste to reconcile you to yourself; and the whole world shall leap and run to be of your opinion. Imprison that stammering tongue within its white fence until you have a necessary sentiment or a useful fact to utter, and that said, be dumb again. Then your words will weigh something, --two tons, like St. John's.³

In February, 1837, Carlyle wrote praising Emerson that he was the only man in America "who has quietly set himself down on a competency to follow his own path, and do the work his own will prescribes for him."

Carlyle continued:

It is a poor country where all men are sold to Mammon, and can make nothing but Railways and Bursts of Parliamentary Eloquence! And yet your New England here too has the upper hand of our Old England: we are too sold to Mammon, soul, body, and spirit; but (mark that, I pray you, with double pity) Mammon will not pay us.

And after this he advised Emerson to "sit still at Concord, with such spirit as you are of; under the blessed skyey influences, with an open

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1. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 39. February 3, 1835.
 2. See RWE: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 52. "I received your letter of the 3d of February on the 20th instant."
 3. RWE: Journals, III, 476.

sense, with the great Book of Existence open round you: we shall see whether you too get not something blessed to read us from it."¹

Emerson received this letter on March 31, 1837;² on June 10, in an address on education, he told his listeners:

The disease of which the world lies sick is the inaction of the higher faculties of man. Men are subject to things. A man is an appendage to a fortune, to an institution. The object of education is to emancipate us from this subjection, to inspire the youthful man with an interest and a trust in himself, and thus to conspire with the Divine Providence. If it fall short of this, it only arms the senses to pursue their low ends; it makes only more skilful servants of Mammon.³

The similarity of this idea to that of Carlyle plus the mention of the word Mammon, certainly no common word to Emerson, makes the source certain.

In December, 1837, Carlyle wrote a letter which to Emerson was vitally important. A long extract is necessary.

It was long decades of years that I had heard nothing but the infinite jangling and jabbering, and inarticulate twittering and screeching, and my soul had sunk down sorrowful, and said there is no articulate speaking then any more, and thou art solitary among stranger-creatures? And lo, out of the West comes a clear utterance; clearly recognizable as a man's voice, and I have a kinsman and brother: God be thanked for it! [Carlyle had just received Emerson's "The American Scholar", an address delivered on August 31, 1837.] I could have wept to read that speech; the high clear melody of it went tingling through my heart; I said to my wife, 'There, woman!' She read; and returned, and charges me to return for answer, 'that there had been nothing met with like it since Schiller went silent.' . . . for you, my dear friend, I say and pray heartily: May God grant you strength; for

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1. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 113-4. February 13, 1837.
 2. In a letter dated March 31, 1837, Emerson wrote to Carlyle, "This morning I received your letter of February 13th." Ibid., 117.
 3. RWE: Cited in Cabot, J. E., Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson, II, 350.

you have a fearful work to do! Fearful I call it; and yet it is great, and the greatest. O for God's sake keep yourself still quiet! Do not hasten to write; you cannot be too slow about it. Give no ear to any man's praise or censure; know that that is not it: on the one side is as Heaven if you have strength to keep silent, and climb unseen; yet on the other side, yawning always at one's right-hand and one's left, is the frightfullest Abyss and Pandemonium! See Fenimore Cooper; --poor Cooper, he is down in it; and had a climbing faculty too. Be steady, be quiet, be in no haste; and God speed you well!¹

How this letter must have pleased Emerson, who had met so much censure with his ideas. On February 3, 1838, he wrote, "Five days ago came Carlyle's letter, and has kept me warm ever since with its affection and praise."² Two days later, taking to himself one of Carlyle's appeals, he added to his journal, "Fame is not the result we seek. Fame to my man shall be as the tinkle of a passing sleighbell."³ Within a few days he repeated the same idea in different terms. "Opinion is our secondary or outward conscience--very unworthy to be compared with the primary, but, when that is seared, this becomes of great importance. A man whose legs are sound may play with his cane or throw it away, but if his legs are gouty, he must lean on his cane."⁴

Carlyle's letter of March 16, 1838 said over again the same thing.

"And now I have but one thing to add and to repeat," he wrote:

Be quiet, be quiet! The fire that is in one's own stomach is enough, without foreign bellows to blow it

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1. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 141-3. December 8, 1837.
 2. RWE: Journals, IV, 389.
 3. Ibid., 392. February 5, 1838.
 4. Ibid., 394. February 9, 1838.

ever and anon. My whole heart shudders at the thrice-wretched self-combustion into which I see all manner of poor paper-lanterns go up, the wind of 'popularity' puffing at them, and nothing left ere long but ashes and sooty wreck.¹

Five days after he had received this letter, Emerson wrote in his journal:

What do we chiefly recommend to the student? Solitude--silence. Why? That he may become acquainted with his thoughts. . . . If he pines in a lonely place, hankering for the crowd, for display, he is not in the lonely place; his heart is in the market; he does not see: he does not hear; he does not think. But go cherish your soul; expel companions; set your habits to a life of solitude; then will the faculties rise fair and full within, like forest trees and wild flowers; you will have results, which, when you meet your fellow-men, you can communicate, and they will gladly receive.²

On June 15, 1838, Carlyle wrote, "Friend Emerson ought to be content; --and has now above all things, as I said, to be in no haste. Slow fire does make sweet malt: how true, how true!"³ On August 6, Carlyle's letter in hand, Emerson replied, "I will now try to hold my tongue until next winter."⁴

Carlyle's June letter, however, contained more for Emerson than this repeated plea to sit still. Carlyle had noticed in Emerson's writings a tendency to work in abstractions, in the flighty metaphysical terms of New England transcendentalism. And so he wrote that Emerson's "next work ought to be a concrete thing; not theory any longer, but deed."⁵ This

1. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 155.

2. RWE: Journals, IV, 452. May 14, 1838. Works, I, 173-4. Emerson had received Carlyle's letter on May 9. See Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 158.

3. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 168-9.

4. RWE: Ibid., 174.

5. TC: Ibid., 169.

same idea, as I shall point out, appears again and again in Carlyle's letters from this time forth.

In September, 1838, Carlyle wrote to Emerson of John Sterling, "I cannot teach him the great art of sitting still; his fine qualities are really like to waste for want of that."¹ During November Carlyle wrote again to express his pleasure over Emerson's address, "Literary Ethics." "A right brave Speech; announcing, in its own way, with emphasis of full conviction, to all whom it may concern, that great forgotten truth, Man is still man." To this he added, "Live, for God's sake, with what Faith thou couldst get; leave off speaking about Faith! Thou knowest it not. Be silent, do not speak."²

On March 10, 1839, Emerson wrote in his journal, "Isolation must precede society. I like the silent church before the service begins much better than any preaching."³

In a letter which Emerson received about the first of April, 1839, Carlyle advised him again to write "some concrete Thing, some Event, man's Life, American Forest, or piece of Creation, which this Emerson loves and wonders at, well Emersonized, depicted by Emerson, filled with the life of Emerson, and cast forth from him then to live by itself."⁴

And then on June 24, 1839, Carlyle wrote:

As for me I honor peace before all things; the silence of a great soul is to me greater than anything it will ever say, it can ever say. Be tranquil, my friend; utter no word till you cannot help it; --and think yourself a 'reporter', till you find (not with any great joy) that you are not

1. Ibid., 180. September 25, 1838.

2. Ibid., 189-90. November 7, 1838.

3. RWE: Journals, V, 172-3.

4. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 217. February 8, 1839.

altogether that!¹

Emerson received this letter on August 8.² A month later he wrote in his journal:

It seems as if the present age of words should naturally be followed by an age of silence, when men shall speak only through facts, and so regain their health. We die of words. We are hanged, drawn, and quartered by dictionaries. We walk in the vale of shadows.³

In September Carlyle wrote, "I pray that they do not confuse you by praises; their blame will do no harm at all. Praise is sweet to all men; and yet alas, alas, if the light of one's own heart go out, bedimmed with poor vapors and sickly false glitterings and flashings, what profit is it!"⁴ On November 9, three weeks after he had received this letter,⁵ Emerson entered in his journal, "Fear when your friends say to you what you have done well."⁶

Carlyle's letter of April, 1840, brought again the appeal to be in no hurry. ". . . do not hurry yourself, but strive with deliberate energy to produce what in you is best. Certainly, I think, a right book does lie in the man! It is to be remembered also always that the true value is determined by what we do not write!"⁷

Gradually this exhortation to "sit and be silent" was dissolving into the background in Carlyle's letters; after 1840 he seldom mentioned

1. Ibid., 246.

2. See ibid., 254.

3. RWE: Journals, V, 254. September 14, 1839.

4. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, Supplementary Letters, 19. September 4, 1839.

5. Emerson received Carlyle's September 4 letter on October 15, 1839. See RWE: Letters, II, 229.

6. RWE: Journals, V, 320.

7. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, I, 275-6. April 1, 1840.

it.¹ Meanwhile a new preachment was displacing the old. The new idea has already been met with, but it was not until after 1840 that it became paramount in Carlyle's letters.

On September 26, 1840, Carlyle wrote to Emerson about the first issue of the Dial,² the central periodical of New England transcendentalism.

. . . of course I read it with interest; it is an utterance of what is purest, youngest in your land; pure, ethereal, as the voices of the morning! And yet--you know me--for me it is too ethereal, speculative, theoretic: all theory becomes more and more confessedly inadequate, untrue, unsatisfactory, almost a kind of mockery to me! I will have all things condense themselves, take shape and body, if they are to have my sympathy.³

By December he had read the second number of the Dial and wrote to Emerson of it. ". . . it is all good and very good as soul; wants only a body, which want means a great deal!"⁴

And again the following November Carlyle wrote of the Dial. ". . . it is all spirit-like, aeriform, aurora-borealis like. Will no Angel body himself out of that; no stalwart Yankee man, with color in the cheeks of him, and a coat on his back!"⁵ In the same letter Carlyle criticised

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1. Although Carlyle made three or four passing references to the idea between 1840 and 1848, only once did he mention it in any length to Emerson. On November 19, 1841, he wrote, "A thinker, I take it, in the long run finds that essentially he must ever be and continue alone; --alone: 'Silent, rest over him the stars, and under him the graves'!" The clatter of the world, be it a friendly, be it a hostile world, shall not intermeddle with him much." Ibid., 351.
 2. Emerson was one of the chief contributors to the Dial and for a time was its editor.
 3. Ibid., 304.
 4. Ibid., 314. December 9, 1840.
 5. Ibid., 352. November 19, 1841.

Emerson's oration "The Method of Nature." It seemed to Carlyle "the best written of them all. People cry over it: 'Witherward? What, What?' In fact I do again desiderate some concretion of these beautiful abstracta. It seems to me they will never be right otherwise; that otherwise they are but as prophecies yet, not fulfilments."¹

Emerson seems to have learned well Carlyle's teaching to sit still and be in no hurry, but he did not, or could not, go along with this later appeal. In July, 1842, after praising Carlyle in his journal, he added, "Yet I always feel his limitation, and praise him as one who plays his part well according to his light, as I praise the Clays and Websters. For Carlyle is worldly, and speaks not out of the celestial region of Milton and Angels."² The basic difference between Carlyle and Emerson--a difference which their deep friendship had blinded them from seeing--was now becoming apparent to both of them.

On August 29, 1842, again writing of the Dial, of which Emerson was then editor, Carlyle said:

I love your Dial, and yet it is with a kind of shudder. You seem to me in danger of dividing yourselves from the Fact of this present Universe, in which alone, ugly as it is, can I find any anchorage, or soaring away after Ideas, Beliefs, Revelations, and such like, into perilous altitudes, as I think; beyond the curve of perpetual frost, for one thing! . . . Surely I could wish you returned into your own poor nineteenth century, its follies and maladies, its blind or half-blind, but gigantic toilings, its laughter and its tears, and trying to evolve in some measure the hidden Godlike that lies in it; --that seems to me the kind

1. Ibid.

2. RWE: Journals, VI, 222-3. July 12, 1842.

of feat for literary men. Alas, it is so easy to screw one's self up into high and ever higher altitudes of Transcendentalism, and see nothing under one but the everlasting snows of Himmalayah, the Earth shrinking to a Planet, and the indigo firmament sowing itself with daylight stars; easy for you, for me: but whither does it lead? I dread always, To inanity and mere injuring of the lungs! . . . Well, I do believe, for one thing, a man has no right to say to his own generation, turning quite away from it, 'Be damned!'. . . Come back into it, I tell you.¹

Finally Emerson answered Carlyle on this matter. Early in 1844 he wrote:

You sometimes charge me with I know not what sky-blue, sky-void idealism. As far as it is a partiality, I fear I may be more deeply infected than you think me. I have very joyful dreams which I cannot bring to paper, much less to any approach to practice, and I blame myself not at all for my reveries, but that they have not yet got possession of my house and barn.²

What effect this latter teaching had upon Emerson is impossible to determine. He never consciously tried to adhere to it; it seems to have had no effect upon his journals. And yet it is difficult to say that it had no influence whatsoever, that Emerson was in no way different because of it. Perhaps he became more concerned with contemporary social problems because of it. And then again, perhaps not. Ultimately there is no way of knowing, and any conclusion reached must at best be little more than conjectural.

1. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, II, 11-2.

2. RWE: Ibid., 59. February 29, 1844.

CHAPTER IV

EMERSON'S SECOND VISIT TO ENGLAND

"In Carlyle, a large caprice."¹

- Emerson Journals, 1847-8

In the autumn of 1847 Emerson sailed from Boston on his second trip to Europe. His fame already well established, he was to give a series of lectures throughout the British Isles. As might be expected, both he and Carlyle were anxious to see each other again; it had been fourteen years since that idyllic day at Craigenputtock. Upon arrival at Liverpool Emerson found waiting for him a letter from Carlyle, inviting--commanding--him to travel to Chelsea immediately. "Know then, my Friend, that in verity your Home while in England is here; and all other places, whither work or amusement may call you, are but inns and temporary lodgings."² Finding that his lectures did not begin for a week, Emerson was soon on his way to London and Carlyle.

He stayed with the Carlyles three days before he returned to Liverpool. He found Carlyle "an immense talker, and, altogether, as extraordinary in that as in his writing; I think even more so. You will never discover his real vigor and range, or how much more he might do than he has ever done, without seeing him. My few hours' discourse with him, long ago, in Scotland gave me not enough knowledge of him; and I have now, at last, been taken by surprise by him."³

1. RWE: Cited in Scudder, Townsend, A Lonely Wayfaring Man, 60.
From the typescript journals.

2. TC: Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, II, 145. October 15, 1847.

3. RWE: Journals, VII, 345. October, 1847.

And then showing that he was not only taken by surprise but also disappointed by Carlyle, he added, "I see that I shall not readily find better or wiser men than my old friends at home."¹ Back in Liverpool to begin his lectures, he told Francis Espinasse, "Carlyle's heart is as large as the world, but he is growing morbid."² The deep difference between the two men, so apparent to those who knew them both, was becoming increasingly clear to each of them.

During one of Emerson's early visits with the Carlyles at Chelsea, an argument arose about Cromwell. At its conclusion, according to George Phillips, Emerson's earliest biographer, Carlyle "rose like a great Norse giant from his chair--and, drawing a line with his finger across the table, said, with terrible fierceness: Then, sir, there is a line of separation between you and me as wide as that and as deep as the pit."³

Later Emerson wrote that "all Carlyle's friends feel the caprice and incongruity of his opinions."⁴ And in Paris in May, 1848, he added to his journal:

The one thing odious to me now is joking. What can the brave and strong genius of C. himself avail? What can his praise, what can his blame avail me, when I know that if I fall or if I rise, there still awaits me the inevitable joke? . . . God grant me the noble companions whom I have left at home who value merriment less, and virtues and powers more.⁵

1. Ibid., 346.

2. RWE: Cited in Espinasse, Francis, Literary Recollections and Sketches, London, 1893, pages 156-7.

3. Phillips, George Searle, Emerson, London, 1855, page 47.

4. RWE: Journals, VII, 445. May 6, 1848. (-)

5. Ibid., 459. May 13, 1848.

Meanwhile, the lecture series was a success; Emerson had lived up to his advance notice. Carlyle attended whenever he could, and was instrumental in arranging a series of lectures for Emerson in London. But he was hardly pleased with what Emerson said. The lectures, he thought, were "pleasant moonshining discourses, delivered to a rather rapid miscellany of persons (friends of humanity, chiefly), and [he] was not much grieved at the ending of them."¹

This second meeting marked the end of Carlyle's influence upon Emerson. The enchantment of their relationship had diminished. And even more important from the standpoint of my work Emerson's thinking had solidified. After his return from England he repeated again and again the ideas of his mature thought. But little that was new appeared. He was no longer capable of being influenced.

Although the influence ended at this time, the friendship between Carlyle and Emerson certainly did not. The day at Craigenputtock and the correspondence that followed had insured their friendship against minor storms. To follow the course of this friendship to its end with Emerson's

1. TC: Letter from Chelsea, July 19, 1848, to his sister Jean Aitken. MS in National Library of Scotland. Also cited in Scudder, Townsend, "Emerson in London and the London Lecture Series", (American Literature, VIII, page 29. March, 1936).

death, however, would be extraneous to my thesis.¹

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1. The later relationship was such that it is quite apparent that each held their early friendship as an almost sacred treasure. For example:

When Carlyle made his most vehement expressions against America, Emerson was urged to denounce him; it was his duty (or so he was told) to do so. But this he could never do, and he stood silent until the storm had subsided. (See Fields, Anne Authors and Friends, Boston and New York, 1897, pp. 96-7.)

In March of 1870, Emerson sent to Carlyle a copy of his latest book, Society and Solitude. Inscribed within the flyleaf, Emerson had written, "To the General in Chief from his Lieutenant." (RWE: Carlyle, Alexander, editor, New Letters of Thomas Carlyle, London, 1904, II, 266).

A year earlier Carlyle had given Emerson his collected works (in thirty three volumes) inscribed, "To Ralph Waldo Emerson Esq. (Concord Massachusetts) In loving memory of a long friendship T. Carlyle." (This was the Library Edition published by Chapman and Hall, London, 1869. At present it is in the Emerson Study in the Concord Antiquarian Society Building. Mrs. Ralph Emerson assisted me in obtaining this material).

On his death bed, when familiar objects in his room began to look strange, Emerson smiled and pointed to a picture of Carlyle and said, "That is my man, my good man." (RWE: Emerson, Edward Waldo, Emerson in Concord, London, 1899, page 194.

PART FIVE

CONCLUSION

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Ultimately Carlyle's influence upon Emerson can be measured in only one way--by the change in Emerson because of Carlyle.¹ If there is no change, there is no influence; and all of the comparing of essays and journals and letters can show little. If there is a small change, then that is the measure of the influence. And so on. Ultimately, too, there is no way of measuring fully and accurately this change.² So any of the conclusions I have reached and will mention shortly are at best tentative and based upon necessarily incomplete evidence. I have taken the available evidence, sifted and weighed and judged, trying always to see those changes in Emerson which were caused by Carlyle. Here briefly are the results, specific where the evidence warrants, broad and general where the conclusions are vague.

At first Carlyle was to Emerson no more than a small anonymous voice in what Emerson called "modern philosophy."³ And

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1. I use the word change in a broad sense. Emerson already believed much of what Carlyle told him. Carlyle's words at times strengthened Emerson's own convictions. That constituted a change in Emerson. Obviously, then, I do not limit the meaning of change to a change (in the narrower sense) of mind or thought.
 2. Theoretically there is a way of measuring the change in Emerson as a result of Carlyle. And that is this: to go back into history to Heclefechan in 1795 and do away with the infant Carlyle in his crib. Then by subtracting the Emerson without Carlyle from the Emerson with Carlyle we would learn the true measurements of Carlyle's influence. I mention this theoretical approach only to point out again that my conclusions must be tentative.
 3. See above page 16.

as such he had a small part in leading the young minister toward the revelation of God within. Carlyle's particular addition here, however, is indistinguishable in the strange agglomeration of new thought working upon Emerson. The various components of "modern philosophy" affected Emerson as an intermingled mass rather than as separate forces. I must be content, then, with saying only that Carlyle was a part (and a small one, at that) of the influence the early influx of Romanticism had on Emerson.

Carlyle soon, however, had a unique role to play in Emerson's life. By 1831, surely no later than early 1832, Emerson sensed the common authorship of several essays. The vehement style as though the author were shouting from the rooftops, the pragmatic examples, the emphasis upon German ideas, marked these essays as the work of one man. Emerson had already had his revelation. And deep within him already stirred a feeling that he must leave the ministry. Then came to him over a period of time through many essays in several different periodicals a confirming voice telling him to obey the vague stirrings and to force into action the dictates of his soul. Carlyle stood alone in this; this was his message saying in effect, "You're right, do something about it." This confirming strengthening message came when Emerson was deep in doubt and when others offered little more than meaningless consolation. In the middle of 1832 Emerson acted upon his convictions; he left the church, the institution which through tradition had claimed him. Carlyle's part in this change was substantial, an addition without which Emerson

might have acquiesced to the pressures of tradition. in/

Having cast off one vocation, Emerson was in search of another. Here again a strong Carlyle influence acted. Soon after his separation from the church, Emerson learned that Thomas Carlyle was his "Germanick new-light writer",¹ and for two months he read Carlyle almost exclusively. At the end of this time Emerson envisaged himself a man of letters. A close connection between Carlyle and Emerson's new dream is certain. In a sense, then, Carlyle was largely responsible for the tearing down of the old in Emerson and the building up of the new.

One might argue that the cryptic forces of heredity and environment had assured that Emerson would be a man of letters. To a degree, this is true; Emerson seemed to have a natural bent toward a life of letters. And yet that propensity in itself is seldom enough. To it must be added a number of extrinsic forces which combine to complement the natural tendency. Here Carlyle played his part. Supplementing Emerson's bent, Carlyle's emphasis upon the life of the literary man (especially in his Life of Schiller) enhanced Emerson's feelings toward literature.

Essentially it was Carlyle's view of life that affected Emerson. Here was the plea to genuineness and to action; here underneath was the distinction between reason and understanding; and finally here was the glowing and sensitive portrait of the life of the literary man.

THE END

1. RWE: Journals, II, 515. October 1, 1832.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Two other forces working on Emerson in 1832

1. In 1831 and 1832 Emerson read widely about science, and certainly this reading affected his thinking about the church. For example, in March of 1831 he wrote, "The Religion that is afraid of science dishonors God and commits suicide."¹ The following May he added:

Calvinism suited Ptolemaism. The irresistible effect of Copernican Astronomy has been to make the great scheme for the Salvation of man absolutely incredible. Hence great geniuses who studied the mechanism of the heavens became unbelievers in the popular faith. . . .²

In his article "Emerson and Science", H. H. Clark states that the immediate influence behind Emerson's withdrawal from the Unitarian Old North Church was that of writers of astronomy such as Mary Sommerville and Sir William Herschel. Certainly this is an overstatement, but it does contain an element of truth. For a more complete study of this influence, see Clark's article itself.³

2. Early in 1830 Emerson was attracted to George Fox through his reading of Sewell's History of the Quakers. Two years later during the summer of 1832 he reread Sewell and skimmed through Tuke's Memoirs of the Life of Fox. Again it is certain that this reading

1. RWE: Journals, II, 362.

2. RWE: Journals, II, 490-1. Emerson had just read Mary Sommerville's translation and popularization of Laplace's Mecanique celeste.

3. Clark, H. H., "Emerson and Science", Philological Quarterly, vol. X, no. 3, July 1931, pp. 225-260.

influenced him. He discussed the Quaker ideas in his journal and his final sermon on the Lord's Supper is little more than a Quaker objection to the sacrament. For more on this, see the articles by Tolles and Turpie.¹

1. Tolles, Frederick B., "Emerson and Quakerism", American Literature, vol. 10, no. 2, May 1938, pp. 142-165.

Turpie, M. C., "A Quaker Source for Emerson's Sermon on the Lord's Supper", New England Quarterly, vol. 17, March 1944, pp. 95-101.

APPENDIX B

Portions of letters to me about my work

1. From W. H. Bond, Curator of MSS of the Houghton Library of Harvard University, April 22, 1954:¹

Sartor Resartus is, so far as I can determine, nowhere named in the three notebooks containing the journal entries for 1832. It is the editors who have interjected the name, and evidently only on the basis of the passage you note on p. 530. This occurs on p. 85 of notebook Q (our no. 26), immediately preceded on p. 84 by the entry for 14 November (omitted in the published journal, and having nothing to do with Carlyle or anything like Sartor), and immediately followed at the foot of p. 85 by the entry for 24 November as published. There is nothing in the handwriting, which is unquestionably Emerson's, to distinguish it from other entries around it. In other words, I do not believe it to be a later interpolation, by Emerson or by anyone else.

Of course the book-list given at the end of each year's entries is the work of the editors, and I suppose that they were led into this anachronistic assumption by their knowledge of Emerson's later close connection with the publication of Sartor in America. They apparently never troubled to look into the publishing history of the book, at least in sufficient detail to catch their error.

2. From Amelia Forbes Emerson, Secretary of The Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association, May 5, 1954:²

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1. The book list at the end of Emerson's Journals for 1832 contains the title Sartor Resartus. Since Sartor Resartus was not published until 1833-34, I was puzzled and wrote about it to the Houghton Library, where the Emerson MSS are kept. This is part of the letter which I received in answer.
 2. I wondered if Emerson made any notes in his personal copies of Carlyle's writings and wrote to the Emerson Memorial and the Houghton Library concerning this. Their replies make up the next two parts of this Appendix.

In answer to your request for information as to annotations by Mr. Emerson in his volumes of the works of Carlyle I have today looked in his study which has been installed completely at the Concord Antiquarian Society. There I found Mr. Emerson's complete set of Carlyle's works (33 vols.). The first volume, after the Index, is Sartor Resartus and in this is the inscription in Mr. Carlyle's hand, when he gave it to Mr. Emerson. I looked carefully through this volume and could find no marks or annotations whatever. I also looked superficially through a number of the other volumes and found no marks in them. I also looked in the Emerson House hoping that I might find a working copy at least of Sartor Resartus with notes and annotations, but could not find any. This does not mean that one does not exist, for some of the especial volumes are in the Houghton Library. The study was so dark that it was difficult to see the books on the top shelves. All that I can say is that in the presentation set there appears to be nothing except the writing by Mr. Carlyle himself, in the first volume.

The inscription in volume one of the thirty three volume set given to Emerson by Carlyle is as follows:

To Ralph Waldo Emerson Esq. (Concord, Massachusetts)
In loving memory of a long friendship.

T. Carlyle

Chelsea, 26 Jan., 1869

3. From Professor William A. Jackson, Director of the
Houghton Library of Harvard University, May 12, 1954:

I have asked to have all of the works of Carlyle which belonged to Emerson and are now in this Library examined to see if they contain any annotations. They do not other than presentation inscriptions. Even the copy of Sartor Resartus, the offprint from Fraser's Magazine which Emerson sent to Lidian Emerson, that is Mrs. R. W. E., contains no annotations. Whatever copy Emerson used to send to the printer has presumably not survived.

4. From W. H. Bond, Curator of MSS of the Houghton Library,

April 21, 1955:¹

The relevant page of Emerson's journal C (Houghton 35) reads:

Thomas Carlyle's Writings

German Romance, 4 volumes. Life of Schiller
Translation of Wilhelm Meister, 3 volumes. In
Edinburgh Review, no

CX	Cornlaw Rhymes
XCII	German Literature
XCVI	Bruns
CVIII	Characteristics
XCVIII	Signs of the Times
CV	Taylor's Historic Survey

In Foreign Review vol. 5 Richter
In Foreign Review vol. 1 Werner
Foreign Review vol. 11 Diderot
Foreign Review vol. 4 Novalis
Foreign Review vol. 1 Goethe's Helena
Foreign Review vol. 11 Goethe
Foreign Review vol. VI Voltaire
Foreign Q. Review, Vol. VIII German Literature in
14 & 15 centuries
F.Q.R. vol X Goethe's Works
Foreign Review vol 3 German Playwrights

In Fraser's Magazine vol 3 Schiller
vol 5, p. 379 Samuel Johnson
vol 2. p. 413 Thoughts on History
vol 2 Luther's Hymn
Sartor Resartus
vol. 8 Count Cagliostro
Diamond Necklace

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1. In volume IV of Emerson's published Journals appears on page 217 (April, 1837) the following note by the editors:

Two pages of extracts follow, concerning
French traits, from Eckermann, Zeutner,
Carlyle, Las Cases, O'Meara, and others:
then a careful list of all Carlyle's writings
in the English reviews, and his books up to
that time. . . .

I wrote to the Houghton Library again and received the letter reproduced here.

vol. 5
vol 4

Biography
Night Moth

In Westminster Review. Mirabeau

French Parliamentary History

Lockhart's Life of Scott

Varnhagen von Ense

The French Revolution, A History; 3 vols.

These are all on page 47 of the journal, with the exception of the last entry which is on p. 48; this entry and the Life of Schiller look as if they might have been written down at a different (later) time from the rest of the list, being in a darker ink and a slightly different style of handwriting, though still unmistakeably Emerson's.

APPENDIX C

FIVE EMERSON LETTERS¹

Howard M. Fish, Jr.

Edinburgh, Scotland

The five unpublished Emerson letters herein contained are found in the libraries of Edinburgh, Scotland. That four of them are mentioned and dated approximately in The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson² is an unmistakable tribute to the editor of that work, Ralph L. Rusk. To him I acknowledge my debt in presenting these new Emerson letters. They are published with the kind permission of the owners, the National Library of Scotland and the University of Edinburgh Library, and Edward W. Forbes, President of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association.

I

The first letter³ was written to Dr. Samuel Brown (1817-1856),

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1. During the course of my study I came upon five Emerson letters which had never been published. I found out what I could about the letters and published them in American Literature (vol. XXVII, no. 1, March, 1955). They seem to be the most important Emerson letters published since 1939 when Professor Ralph L. Rusk completed his massive six volume work, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The article as it appeared in American Literature is reproduced here.
 2. The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson (New York, 1939). Six volumes. Hereinafter referred to as Letters.
 3. MS in the National Library of Scotland.

an eminent Edinburgh scientist and philosopher. Emerson spent some time as the guest of Dr. Brown in Edinburgh in 1848, and his praise of the "new Paracelsus"⁴ was great. In this letter the date line and signature have been cut out, presumably by Dr. Brown, taking with them a part of the manuscript. That portion in parentheses Dr. Brown added in the place of the cut-out words. The approximate date of the letter has been determined by Rusk as September 1, 1843, using for evidence letters from Brown to Emerson.⁵

My Dear Sir,

I received two or three weeks ago, your letter & the accompanying tracts, & soon after a letter from Mr. Russell,⁶ in Rochester, N. Y., announcing, to my regret, that he would not come into Massachusetts.

I have no right to any of the fine things you tell me, but can very well appreciate their sincerity & eloquence. And your account of your own devotion to pursuits such as you describe, I must read with joy & reverence. Mr. Russell has done me a welcome kindness in adding a few lines to the portrait, in his letter.

(I have as yet read b)ut a little in the (Lay Sermons,⁷ & value no)thing in them (more than the cheerf)ulness & the affectionateness of their tone. The religious sentiment exists, does it not? for the perpetual redintegration of the character; --that our intellectual perception of abuse & deformity may not disgust us with men. I find the conservatives, for the most part, by far the most amiable companions, and am always glad when the love of truth does not make men hate the liars. Such friendly letters as yours

4. For Emerson's account of Brown, see Letters, IV, 17-24.

5. Letters, III, 205.

6. Francis Russell, Esq. See Letters, IV, 21.

7. /Samuel Brown/, Lay Sermons on the Theory of Christianity (London, 1841, 1842).

give me much to think & to hope. In a good world, each should be beforehand assured of the love & aidance of his brother, & prepared to accost him at their first interview in the highest Spirit: but now we have a vast diffidence to remove, and must often consider whether we do not need a secret-masonic tie, as in old & barbarous nations, by which the friends of equity & truth may be holden to the help of each other. But no, the supports of virtue should be sublime, and we must let it go always a stranger & a pilgrim, not bolstering its love by mechanical conveniences, as wealth & politics do by their children, but itself sufficing to make a new & single impression in whatever company of men it appears. It knows its own, & shall be greeted by them in heavenly manners. I have added all this as a sort of soliloquy, for, when I began, it was in my mind (to say that many demons)trations which I had lately observed, had suggested to me the expediency of some formal action towards uniting the like minded men in both hemispheres in some stricter league. Yet there is no league so strict as love, & the good Spirit which works & rules, adjusts the gradations of mutual relation & duty better than could any bye-laws.

I hear gladly what Mr Russell says of your scientific pursuits. Every moment may they be crowned with success! I have little to tell you, in return, of my new⁸ employments, --yet I write down whatever I see that appears to demand a record, & in a few months I may have a chapter or two⁹ which I shall wish you to read. If any friend of yours should come to Boston, I shall be very happy to hear from you, & to serve him.

(Your affectionate Servant,
R. W. Em)

II

The second letter¹⁰ was addressed to Robert Stewart, Esq.,

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8. Although new seems more probable, the word could also be read an non or now.
 9. Presumably this is a reference to the Essays, second series, published in Oct., 1844.
 10. MS in the National Library of Scotland. This is the only one of the letters not mentioned in the Letters.

whom Emerson seems to have met in Paisley, Scotland, on Friday, February 25, 1848.¹¹ Presumably this is the Robert Stewart of Elderslie, a small village near Paisley. This Robert Stewart (1806-1885) published a number of poems in 1850 and was closely identified with the literary men of Paisley. There is, however, no record of his having written the book to which in this letter Emerson refers.¹²

Ambleside
29 Feb^y 1848

Dear Sir,

I promised to send you word of my safe arrival in these poetic regions. I met with no accident on the Caledonian Railway though I saw the frightful wreck of the carriages at Ecclefechan; & on the whole, had the most agreeable ride through the finest scenery. Yesterday, I had a valuable hour¹³ with Mr Wordsworth, who is in vigorous health, though 77 years old; and, tomorrow, I shall set forth once more for Manchester & London. With many pleasing recollections of Paisley, which I hope yet by the aid of your fine book to deepen & inform, I remain your obliged servant,

R. W. Emerson.

Robert Stewart, Esq

11. Letters, IV, 23.

12. There is a possibility, however slight, that Emerson's letter was to Robert Stuart (or Stewart) (1812-Dec. 23, 1848), a Glasgow bookseller. He seems to have had no connection with Paisley, but in 1845 he did publish a book on Roman Antiquities in Scotland which included a short account of the town.

13. Other letters give the time with Wordsworth as an hour and a half. See The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson (London, 1883), II, 160, and Letters, IV, 25, 26.

III

The third letter¹⁴ was written to Miss Katherine Barland (1806?-1875), a Glasgow poetess and school teacher. In 1848 she had been introduced to Emerson during his visit to Glasgow. At that time she presented him with a volume of her poems¹⁵ including one on Emerson.¹⁶ In 1851 was published a smaller book of her poems,¹⁷ some of which sound a marked Emersonian tone. Presumably some of these latter poems were among those mentioned in the letter to Miss Barland.

142 Strand London
2 April 1848

My dear Miss Barland,

I should have sent an earlier reply to your note received the other day, but that it found me just leaving town for two or three days, nor was I, in the mean time, in circumstances to write. I hasten now to say, that I was touched & gratified by the kind confidence with which you honour me. But I ought perhaps to advertise you, that, in all questions touching life & affection, I am reckoned a little stoical, --not a good sympathizer. I could heartily wish you more peace than you seem yet to have found; but that is never far off from a strong mind. Health is more natural, & far more common than sickness, and, at some rate, we must have it. And I cannot but observe that the feeling is spreading through all

14. MS in the University of Edinburgh Library. See Letters, IV, 53.

15. Katherine Barland, Poems (London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, 1845).

16. "Lines to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Esq." begins:

"Hail to thee thou scholar, teacher,
Speaking to man's inmost heart!
Earth hath yet one earnest preacher,
Willing, able to impart"

and proceeds through five pages of idolatrous verse.

17. Katherine Barland, Songs of Consolation (Edinburgh, 1851).

society, that we are somehow accountable for our distempers, & must blush for our rheumatism & typhus. Why not then for moral infirmity of every shade? But I have to say--that I found in my readings in your little book of Poems, such indisputable evidence of good sense, & of all those fine gifts that go to make a good ear, & metrical talent, that I should be forced, if I were within reach of your conversation, to speak to you as to one who need suffer no longer than she liked, since the finest works & pleasures are open to you; & the same power that enables you to succeed in them, qualifies you to exert yourself with security in many other directions. Perhaps now I am less disposed than ever to concede any point to our domestic foes--that I have lately been making some sketches towards a chapter on the Culture of the Intellect. That is a chapter in our mysterious Book of Life, which draws on all our means physical & metaphysical, --on our science & on our tears, --and the attraction of the subject for me is the lofty invitation which it at all times sends into our low & squalid indolence, summoning us to a kingdom of inspiration & miracle without end. I wish you would yourself look that way. The very topics that will first arrange themselves in your mind will nerve you, & lead you on; and, strange to say, it is still new & unexplored ground. But I am outrunning all limits of a note, & yet could not say less. Thanks for the verses, too; though you have written many better. With my best wishes & assurances of your restored & augmented health & happiness, I remain Yours,

R. W. Emerson

IV

The fourth letter¹⁸ was addressed to Jane Welsh Carlyle (1801-1866), wife of Emerson's Scottish literary friend. Emerson first met the Carlyles on August 25, 1833, when he searched out his "Germanick new-light writer"¹⁹ among the desolate farmlands of

18. MS in the National Library of Scotland. See *Letters*, V, 20.

19. Emerson, *Journals*, ed. Edward W. Emerson and Waldo E. Forbes (Boston, 1909-1914), II, 515.

southern Scotland. He visited them again in their London home during his lecture tour of Great Britain in 1847-1848.

Concord, 6 May, 1856

My dear Mrs Carlyle,

Will you let me recall my old name to your remembrance, on the occasion of the visit of a dear & honored friend to London, Mrs Ward²⁰ of Boston, whom I especially wish to present to your kind regards. ²¹ Mrs Ward is the wife of my friend Sam. G. Ward, Esq. whose name I know is known to your husband, --though they have never met, --& is herself the most beloved & valued of all American women. I shall not trust myself to say the least of all the good I know of her, since we at home here who have seen her through many brilliant years may easily doubt whether the new friends she may meet in passing can feel as we do. But I send her to the best, & I shall gladly know that you who know all that is excellent in English Society, have seen our joy & pride. Her health is bad, her physicians advise travel, I wish neuralgic pains were not permitted to assail such goodnesses. Mrs Ward is on her way to Switzerland, where her son is at school, & stops in London a few days. I trust you shall not be ailing, nor in the country, as I have set my heart on her seeing you.

And so, with best thoughts & grateful remembrances, I remain your affectionate servant,

R. W. Emerson.

Mrs. Jane Carlyle.

V

This testimonial²² was written on behalf of James Hutchison

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20. Anna Barker Ward. See Journals, V, 278-280, and Letters, II, 228, 244, 338-339. According to Rusk (Letters, V, 21), the New York Daily Tribune of May 9, 1856, listed Mrs. S. G. Ward as a passenger on the Arabia from Boston to Liverpool.
21. Samuel Gray Ward and Anna Hazard Barker were married on Oct. 3, 1840.
22. A printed copy of this testimonial, but not the MS, is in the University of Edinburgh Library. See Letters, V, 462.

Stirling (1820-1909), at the time a candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. Emerson enclosed the testimonial in a letter of the same date to Stirling,²³ who had it privately printed for distribution among the electors of the university. Regardless of this testimonial and a similar one from Thomas Carlyle, the electors unanimously appointed to the Chair Mr. Edward Caird (1835-1908). Emerson and Stirling met only once, on May 8, 1873, in Edinburgh,²⁴ but their correspondence spans from the date of this testimonial to Stirling's final letter early in 1879.

Additional Testimonial in Favour of James Hutchison Stirling,
Candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of
Glasgow. From Ralph Waldo Emerson, Esq.²⁵

Concord, Massachusetts, 8th May 1866

I have learned that the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow is vacant, and that James Hutchison Stirling, Esq., is a candidate. I have not the advantage of any personal acquaintance with Mr. Stirling, nor any knowledge of him, except through his book, 'The Secret of Hegel';²⁶ nor am I much a reader of metaphysical works. But I have never seen any modern British book which appears to me to show such competence to analyse the most abstruse problems of the Science, and, much more, such singular vigour and breadth of view in treating the matter in relation to literature and humanity. It exhibits a general power of dealing with the subject, which, I think, must

23. For Emerson's letter to Stirling, see Amelia H. Stirling, James Hutchison Stirling (London, 1912), p. 176.

24. Ibid., p. 255.

25. This address Stirling added to the testimonial in accordance with the instructions of Emerson's letter. See n. 22.

26. The Secret of Hegel was first published in London, 1865.

compel the attention of readers in proportion to their strength and subtlety. One of the high merits of the book is its healthy moral perceptions. I have had the science here--whence I look for good results in their own minds and in those of their students. If the Electors of the University of Glasgow can secure the services of such a teacher as Mr. Stirling, I believe they will be most fortunate in their choice. If there can be any question, when such an incumbent can be found, I shall be glad to believe that Intellectual and Moral Science is richer in masters than I have had opportunity to know.

R. W. Emerson

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